CAVALCADE OF BURLESQUE

Vol. 1, No. 1 FALL, 1951

Introduction by

ABBOTT & COSTELLO

HISTORY OF BURLESQUE

Past and Present

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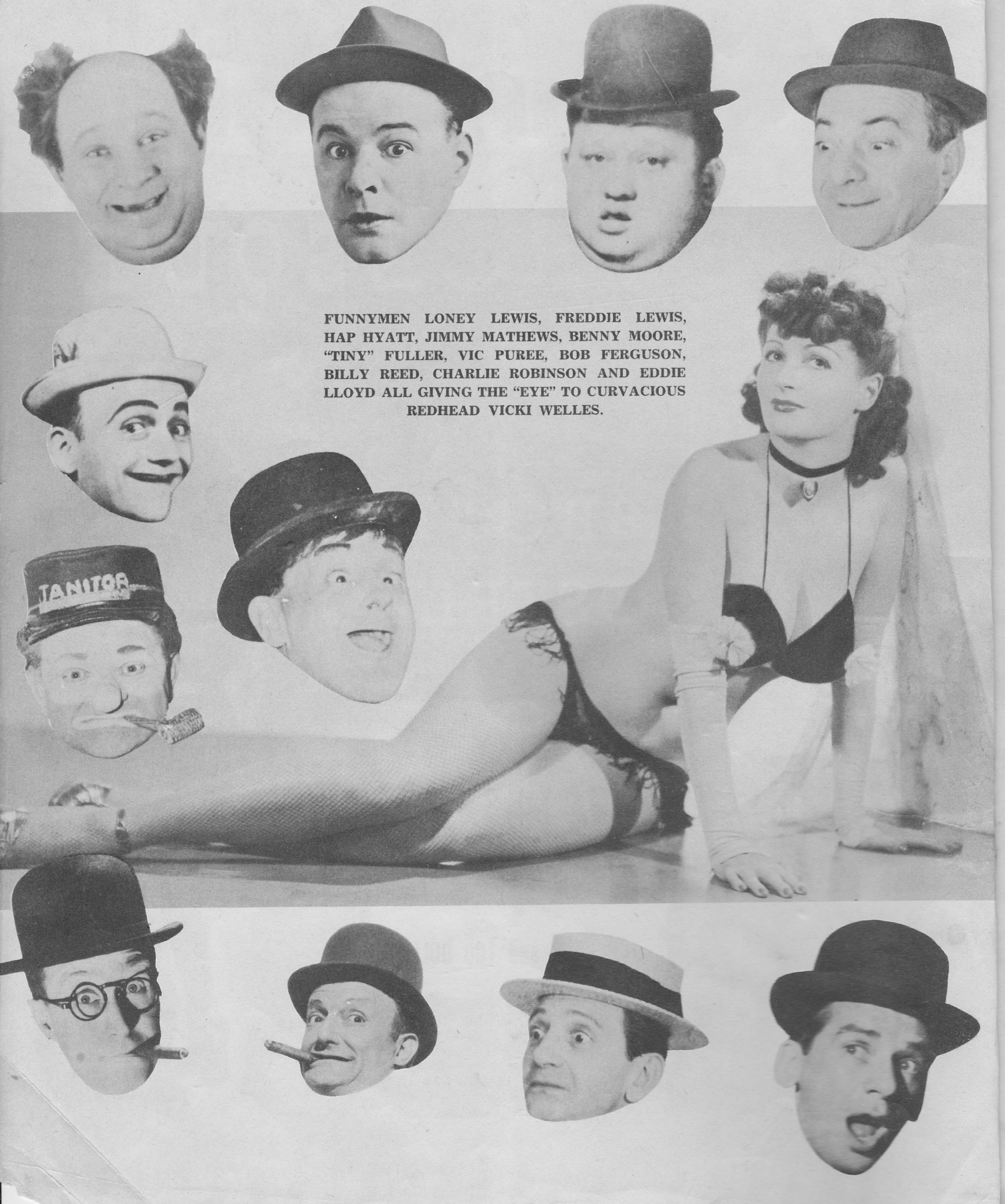
200 GAGS and 100 DOLLS

PRICE 50 CENTS

GYPSY ROSE LEE



FUNNYMEN LONEY LEWIS, FREDDIE LEWIS, HAP HYATT, JIMMY MATHEWS, BENNY MOORE, “TINY” FULLER, VIC PUREE, BOB FERGUSON, BILLY REED, CHARLIE ROBINSON AND EDDIE LLOYD ALL GIVING THE “EYE” TO CURVACIOUS REDHEAD VICKI WELLES.

CAVALCADE OF BURLESQUE

VOL. 1, No. 1 • FALL, 1951

by

JAY J. HORNICK

and

JESS MACK

SKETCHES by FRADELE
EDITED by GEORGE NONAMAKER

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF ISADORE HIRST

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INTRODUCTION

BY

BUD ABBOTT AND LOU COSTELLO

We don't know what your plans are for tomorrow, but, whatever they are, there's a good chance after reading this book, that you will change them, and take in the nearest burlesque show to enjoy and live with the nostalgic cradle of show business.

This book needs an introduction about as much as Eddie Rickenbacker needs a lesson on "how to fly" an aeroplane. This book about burlesque by burlesquers and the words and pictures contained therein will speak for themselves. You won't find the authors in the "Who's Who in the Theatre", but, being familiar with Jay Hornick and Jess Mack for a good many years, we would like to wish them the best of success in their initial job.

During the time spent in burlesque, we have been associated with both of the authors. Jess, the producing straight man, and Jay, for the most time, our boss. They have had years and years of actual experience in the field that they write about, and give freely of their knowledge to you, the reader; and speak with authority on the entire field they cover. They are still associated in carrying on the tradition of burlesque.

We can safely say that we attribute most of our success to our schooling in the burlesque field. You will want to keep this book as a lasting souvenir of a visit to a burlesque theatre, for we know that you will be there tomorrow; but tonight, cradle up in your easy chair, put the light over your eyes, and we know that the light won't go out until you reach the back cover.

Bud Abbott

Lou Costello

"Hello, Joe, whad'ya know . . . Just got back from a Burlesque show!!!" This is as popular a saying as "Take me out to the ball game", heard and repeated by more than a half million weekly devotees, both male and female, throughout the United States, where this type of amusement is presented, whether it be in theatres, night clubs, or under tent.

This magazine endeavors to present in words and pictures the story of burlesque from its origin back in 1868 to its modern (here to stay) present day form.

There have been some writers who "hung the crepe" on burlesque quite some years ago. It is by no means dead. Any history of this form of entertainment must follow its growth, and explain why this type of entertainment is the proving ground of many future stars of the amusement world.

Burlesque is an experience! Many people have a lifetime of experience! Others—go through a lifetime without an experience!

Much has been written and many have been the authors of articles about burlesque, but, primarily, the majority of the penmen have had the problem of getting their information through interviews. Your authors, however, have delved into their own personal experiences to gather what they believe to be the most accurate up-to-the-minute story of burlesque of yesterday and today.

"Burlesque" has been fined, refined, and "loused" up from those calling it low, obscene, lewd, naked; and even has a definition in the Encyclopedia Brittanica. Let everyone define it as they may, but we, from our own experience, would like to add our definition to the magic of the word, "Burlesque".

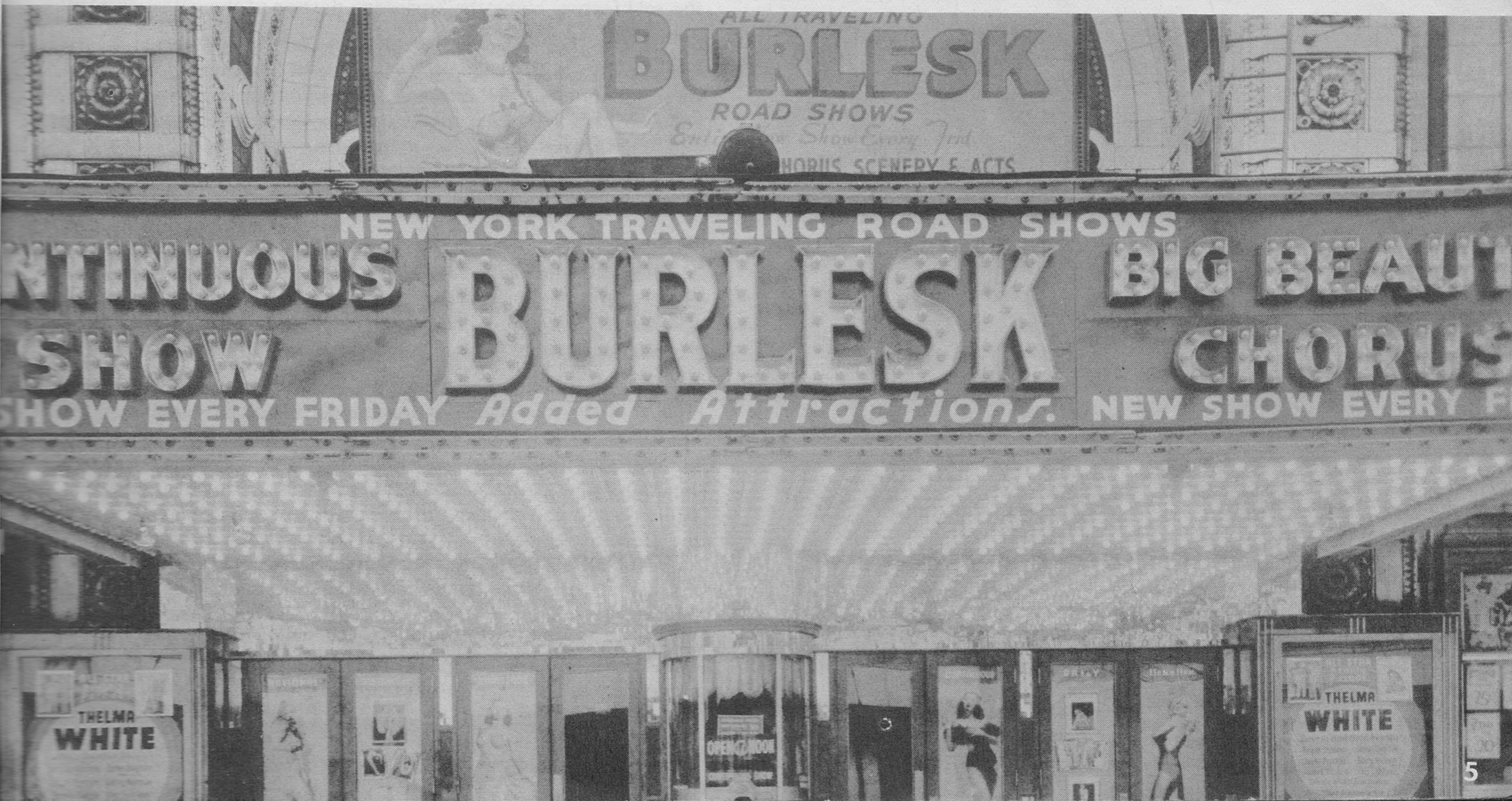
Burlesque 1951—a play of words based upon situations, dealing primarily with the most talked about and written subject "Sex and its Human Behavior", interspersed with laugh provoking props, mingled generously with up-to-date music, and peopled by mirth provoking comics and girls attired in flashy wardrobes accentuating modern dances, wearing no less covering than is seen on present day beaches.

Burlesque from its beginning was satire on other plays, and it still maintains the same principle; but in order to survive as a means of entertainment, there was one thing that had to be copied from other forms of entertainment, nudity and sex situations. These elements were borrowed from the Broadway theatre. However, no hullabaloo is made of burlesque as to its production. (Scenery—costumes and music.) Since no "angels" or backers, are available to put up five and ten thousand dollars, no high price press relation is maintained. The only difference today between Broadway revues and burlesque is the cost of the production, with the former naturally having a higher scale of admission . . . to be exact, about six dollars per seat!!

No burlesque story could be complete without particular mention to the New York situation. New York was the first town that presented American burlesque; and while it might not be the first town that condemned it, it is not without burlesque except as to the spelling . . . BURLESQUE. It is now spelled with the picture of a leg, or with the use of some old-fashioned burlesque titles such as "Star and Garter", or by the engagement in the play of publicized performers identified with burlesque. The authorities merely did a "strip-tease" on the printed and painted sign of burlesque by pulling off the letters and revealing the "leg".

By stripping the burlesque sign in New York there was revealed on all stages less costumes, more nudity, and a greater use of parodies and dialogue pertaining to the attraction of the member of one sex to persons of the other. The authorities merely caused promoters to take burlesque out of the burlesque theatres and put it into the night clubs. They took it away from the general public and gave it to those who can afford to spend lavishly in the hot spots of the big town.

Burlesque will never die as long as the "female leg" keeps its modern curves and the "patrons' leg" can move to the box office. (When the amusement-going public stops walking, seeing, and thinking . . . well, who wants to live then?)



THE BIRTH OF BURLESQUE

Burlesque . . . an important part of American life.

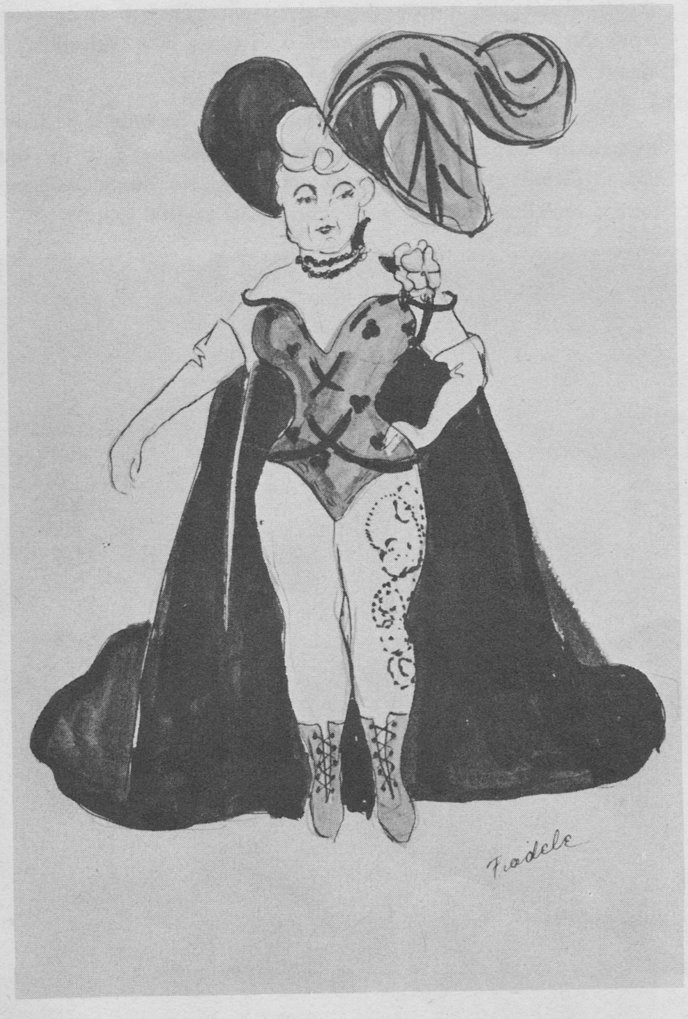
Burlesque? Where was it born? How was the word derived?

Burlesque, borrowed from the Italian "Burlare", meaning "to joke", "to play", "to banter"; "an impression of the face or countenance", the intention being to excite laughter. In the drama, "comic pantomime is burlesque"; in art, "caricature is burlesque". In music, "parody is burlesque". "In literature "satire is burlesque". All burlesque ranges under the head of farce, although all farce is not burlesque. Farce on the stage is a burlesque of events. Burlesque is the farce of portraiture on the stage.

Aristophanes, a comic poet of Athens, whose writings appeared 427 B.C. to 388 B.C., satirized people and their tragedies, and may well be called "The Father of the burlesque play". From this beginning over two thousand years ago, burlesque took on many meanings, especially so with the introduction of dancing, and the clowning about the habits of the male and female.

The beginning of the American burlesque can be traced by a review of the early American Theatre. John Poole, in 1811, produced a travesty on "Hamlet"; and it is he who is given credit with originating what was called "legitimate burlesque", which started a craze for take-offs on Grand Opera and comic female impersonations.

In September, 1866, with the presentation of the production, "The Black Crook" at Niblo's Garden, New York, began what is said to be the birth of all current ballets, comic operas, burlesque, and musical comedies. It was the first large production in which the female form was displayed in all its fullness. (But not in all its beauty, since all of the entertainers wore tights.) The "Black Crook" can be considered America's initial big "leg show".



The first real "leg show" was presented in the United States by Lydia Thompson and her English Blondes in the year 1868. She was known as the first burlesque queen, and journeyed to this country from England with a well-chosen group of artists for the purpose of presenting popular burlesques. Artistic dancing was one of their principal features. She startled the public by openly exhibiting the female figure. (The tights are still there, boys.) Her first appearance in New York was so well received that she remained for almost a year. Miss Thompson was really the pioneer of musical burlesque, and she is the one who is accredited with making American burlesque history. It may have also been the beginning of the American males' present attitude of "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes". Miss Thompson also has the distinction of being the first "pin-up" girl, having reproductions of herself printed on cigarette cards available with all cigarette purchases . . . if you don't remember, ask your father. These photos were hung around the mirrors of saloons. Eight out of 10 men carried them in their wallets. Her last appearance in this country was in Philadelphia in a burlesque called, "As You Like It".

The first American credited with producing a burlesque show was M. B. Leavitt, back in 1870. His show, titled, "Mme. Rentz's Female Minstrels", was a departure from the old style minstrel show composed exclusively of males, and substituted a group of the most talented and beautiful women then known to the stage. Most of his ideas were borrowed from the different forms of entertainment, such as minstrel shows, variety shows, and extravaganzas. Vaudeville did not make its appearance until 1880 when this same M. B. Leavitt first used the term in his advertisements, or so he claimed.

Before the appearance of this show, entertainment in those days was of one kind, either dramatic or minstrel travesty on historical characters and events or on the ordinary variety shows. He conceived the idea of blending an entertainment consisting of three parts, the minstrel, vaudeville, and the burlesque, with the real feature being the burlesque portion of the entertainment.

In the minstrel part of the show all the performers were presented in a grand opening made up of songs and jokes much in the manner of the minstrel shows you are acquainted with, consisting of a circle of male singers, the interlocutor, and the end men, who were the comedians. An example of their style of comedy:

> Interlocutor: "Hey, Bones, why did you tip your hat to that lady? You didn't know her."
>
> Bones: (One of the End Men) "Well, my brother knows her."
>
> Interlocutor: "But what has that got to do with you?"
>
> Bones: "Well, this is my brother's hat."

The vaudeville portion of the show was presented in the olio. Olio is a Spanish word meaning "Middle". This was the center portion of the show where the performers did their individual "turns" or variety acts. Now-a-days the center portion of the show is called "Intermission". However, the olio still exists in one theatre in the entire United States; and that is the Howard Athaeneum (The Old Howard), in Boston, Massachusetts, where burlesque is still presented, and between the first act and the second act there appear vaudeville entertainers. The third portion of the show was called the "Burlesque", or "afterpiece", which were burlesques on the "theatre of the day", such as operas, dramas, et cetera. This third portion of the entertainment was the actual beginning of the burlesque shows in America.

CRADLE DAYS

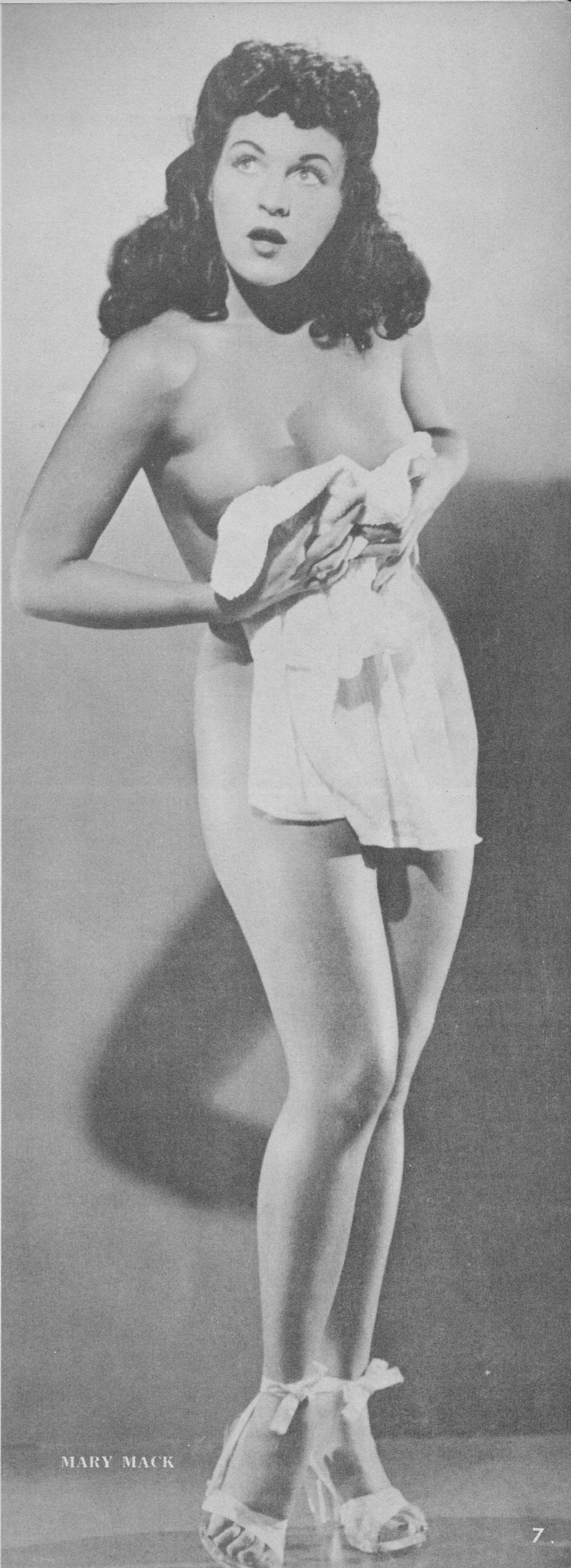
The years from 1870 to 1900 can be said to have been the cradle days of American burlesque, which saw the spreading out of different troupes throughout the country. Having learned to walk, after its birth, burlesque shows sprouted up here, there, and everywhere. The shows themselves burlesqued English subjects and were very popular. It was not until the appearance of the famous Rentz-Santley and the E. E. Rice burlesque companies that native American characteristics were burlesqued on the stage.

Some of the greatest dramatic actors of this period appeared in the burlesque portions of the shows. Some of the shows presented during this time were Ada Richmond's Burlesquers, Ada Kennedy and her African Blonde Minstrels, Victoria Loftus' troupe of British Blondes (and gentlemen still prefer blondes), H. C. Miner's burlesque on "Pinafore".

The comedy team of Weber and Fields, who achieved almost immediate success after making their first appearance in Ada Richmond's burlesque company, were two of the biggest stars coming from this cradle. Their success was so great that they opened their own music hall in New York City known as the "Weber and Fields Music Hall". Jumping from the cradle, Ida Siddons, star of the Mastadon Minstrels, gained fame for her famous rope jumping fire dance. Mabel Santley was heralded as the star of the first American burlesque show. The first American queen of burlesque was considered to be Mae Howard, who also took credit for introducing in a burlesque show the song, "After The Ball". The spiciest thing on the stage at this time was the sight of a woman in tights, and Miss Howard was the first girl to wear them embroidered.

In the theatres that housed these burlesque shows throughout this thirty-year stretch, was born the "chorus girl" contest, "country store" contest, and the "amateur nights" that were prevalent in the burlesque theatres during the first three decades of the twentieth century. In the latter part of this period the "honkey tonks", a name referring to theatres that adjoined saloons or were part of the saloon, sprung up in the western part of the country. Much of the criticism levelled at burlesque came from these honkey tonks, where the girls from the burlesque show used to mingle with the patrons, much the same as they do in present-day night clubs. One Sam T. Jack, of Chicago, was a pioneer in that he is credited with presenting the first modern burlesque show that introduced an opening chorus at the beginning of the show, and then presented chorus numbers in the other parts of the show much in the manner of present-day presentations. He also introduced "Little Egypt", who was the forerunner of the "shimmy shaking" queens of today.

There was no particular booking agency set up in the burlesque business at that time, but, rather, each individual company would try to arrange engagements at the various theatres playing burlesque through their own ingenuity. Theatres then playing burlesque were: Butler's Standard, St. Louis, Missouri; The Howard Athaeneum, Boston, Massachusetts; Smith's Grand Opera House, Grand Rapids, Michigan; The Adelphia, Buffalo, New York; Theatre Comique, Washington, D. C.; Central, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Westminster, Providence, Rhode Island; Pence Opera House, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Alhambra, St. Louis, Missouri; Olympic, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Park, Detroit, Michigan; Gaiety, Albany, New York; Opera House, Newark, New Jersey; Gaiety, Troy, New York; Monumental, Baltimore, Maryland; Theatre Comique, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Buckingham, Louisville, Kentucky; Academy of Music, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Lyceum, Washington, D. C.



MARY MACK

BETTY HOWARD

SHERRY SHANNON

COLUMBIA, *THE JR. COLLEGE*

With the advent of the twentieth century there grew out of burlesque many acknowledged leaders in the amusement field. These leaders had found that the entertainment-seeking public loved variety, and some of them incorporated the Columbia Amusement Company in 1902, and it can be truly said that this company was the first to produce shows to give the public what it wanted.

Known as the Columbia Wheel, or Columbia Circuit, (A wheel or circuit is the terminology used by those associated in the production, management or performance of shows, and consists of a group of theatres owned individually, or jointly, combined for the purpose of securing different shows each week for presentation to the public, with the shows so produced playing at the theatres in the group), this was headed by J. Herbert Mack and Sam A. Scribner, and continued to reign in the burlesque field for over twenty-five years with practically the same executive heads.

This circuit was brought into being at about the turn of the century, being an outgrowth of the Traveling Variety Managers Association, and the Empire Circuit, which was known as the Western Circuit, and the Eastern Circuit of house managers. The management of the various theatres and companies, who produced the burlesque type of entertainment, saw the need to present shows on a week to week basis so that the theatres would have successive bookings. Fully realizing that this could only occur with the working together of all factions, the consolidation gave the participating theatres about forty weeks of different shows successively booked.

This growing up period of a truly American form of entertainment can be referred to as the adolescent period. It was then that the burlesque shows increased their hold on the American public by presenting entertaining shows, full of variety, with well-balanced casts of entertainers. It can be likened to the present-day Junior College, where once a student enters and is fully able to grasp and complete successfully his years of study, he is ready to step ahead for the completion of his education in a University or College to further enable him to prepare for the outside world.

So it was with the performers who appeared in the Columbia Circuit shows. If the entertainers made good showings on the Columbia burlesque shows, the enterprising managers of other fields of amusement knew that these performers were ready to go forward into the other fields of entertainment to delight the entertainment-seeking public. The acclaim of the public was assurance to the entertainers and to the proprietors that the other fields of entertainment, such as motion pictures, Broadway shows, and radio, were ready to accept them as their own. Many entertainers rose to great heights in other forms of show business due to their training in burlesque.

The Columbia Wheel shows played in nearly every large city in the United States from the east coast to the west coast. With the success of the Columbia Circuit there evolved other circuits producing burlesque shows. The biggest of these was the Mutual Circuit under the guiding hand of I. H. Herk. When the Mutual Circuit and the Columbia Circuit were operating in opposition to one another, there were approximately eighty theatres in existence that were playing burlesque entertainment throughout the year. Some of these theatres were in opposition to each other in the same towns. Other burlesque circuits that existed from the time of the Columbia Circuit until the present day were: The American Burlesque Association, with George Peck at the helm; The National Burlesque Association; The Progressive Circuit; The Independent Burlesque Association, with Isadore Hirst as president; The Wilner Circuit with Max A. Wilner as its head; The Supreme Circuit guided by H. K. Minsky; the Hirst Circuit, which was an outgrowth of the Independent Burlesque Circuit headed by I. Hirst, and now under the leadership of Jay J. Hornick; and The Midwest Circuit, under the leadership of Gurston Allen. The latter two are presently the only existing major burlesque wheels. A smaller circuit known as the Ohio Circuit is operated by Jack Kane.

T'S TO STRIP-TEASE AMERICA'S NATIVE DANCE

When you hear the words strip-tease, you are listening to a description of an American art, one that has a purely American origin!

One can say that Eve and her fig leaf is the right place to start to tell the story of strip-teasing. The cave woman, who let her tiger-skin slip slightly to display her curves and bust, was merely trying to entice the desires of her hero, and was the next in line with this "modern" art.

Women of Crete, during the Minoan period (1800 B.C.), dressed elegantly from the waist down, wore practically nothing from the waist up. In ancient Egypt, girls considered it no crime to reveal their "chest expansion"; and in France, during the empire period, the exposure of the chest became almost complete (1800 A.D.).

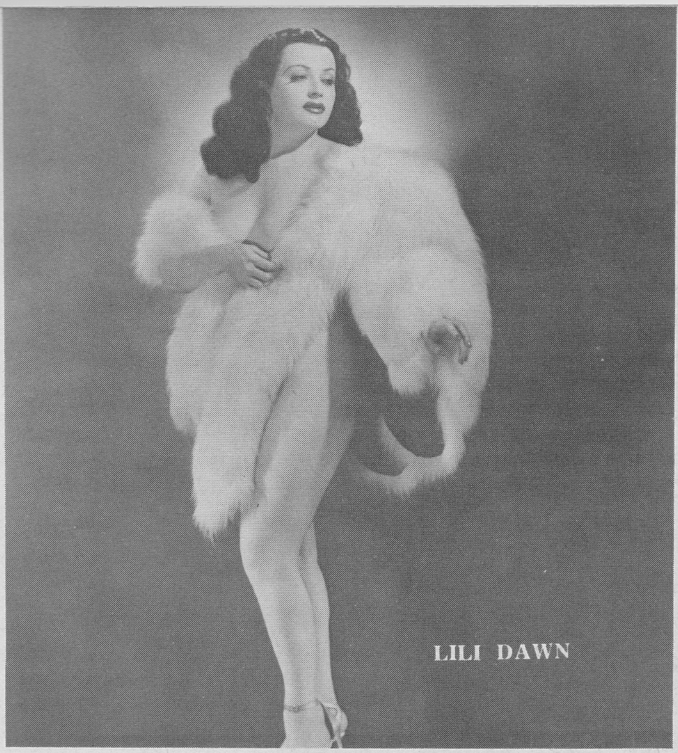
Nudity on the stage was, presumably, introduced in the year of 1869 by a Mme. Marianne de Comargo, premier danseuse at the Paris Opera, and from that beginning the stage display of legs, or limbs, and the display of the legs in a more or less padded form, and bosoms more or less uncovered, started.

Like the time-honored question "which came first the chicken or the egg?" the question in the American theatre is: "Which came first the 'strip' or the 'tease'?" Many and varied are the stories, but after a thorough research with many artists and managers, who have been around show business from twenty-five to fifty years, the true story of the strip-tease and the answer to the questions is "the tease is the mother of the strip."

In 1908 or 1909 Anna Held, first wife of Florenz Ziegfeld, did a disrobing act in a number called "I'd Like To See A Little More Of You" at the Mason Opera House in Los Angeles, in which her clothes were taken off behind a screen. This bit of theatre legerdemain, can be said to be the beginning of the tease, but no nudity was displayed to the audience.

In 1913, at the Hippodrome, on the Barbary Coast in San Francisco, the "Skevo Brothers" had a girl by the theatrical name of "Mazie", who performed an undressing specialty in back of a white shadowgraph.

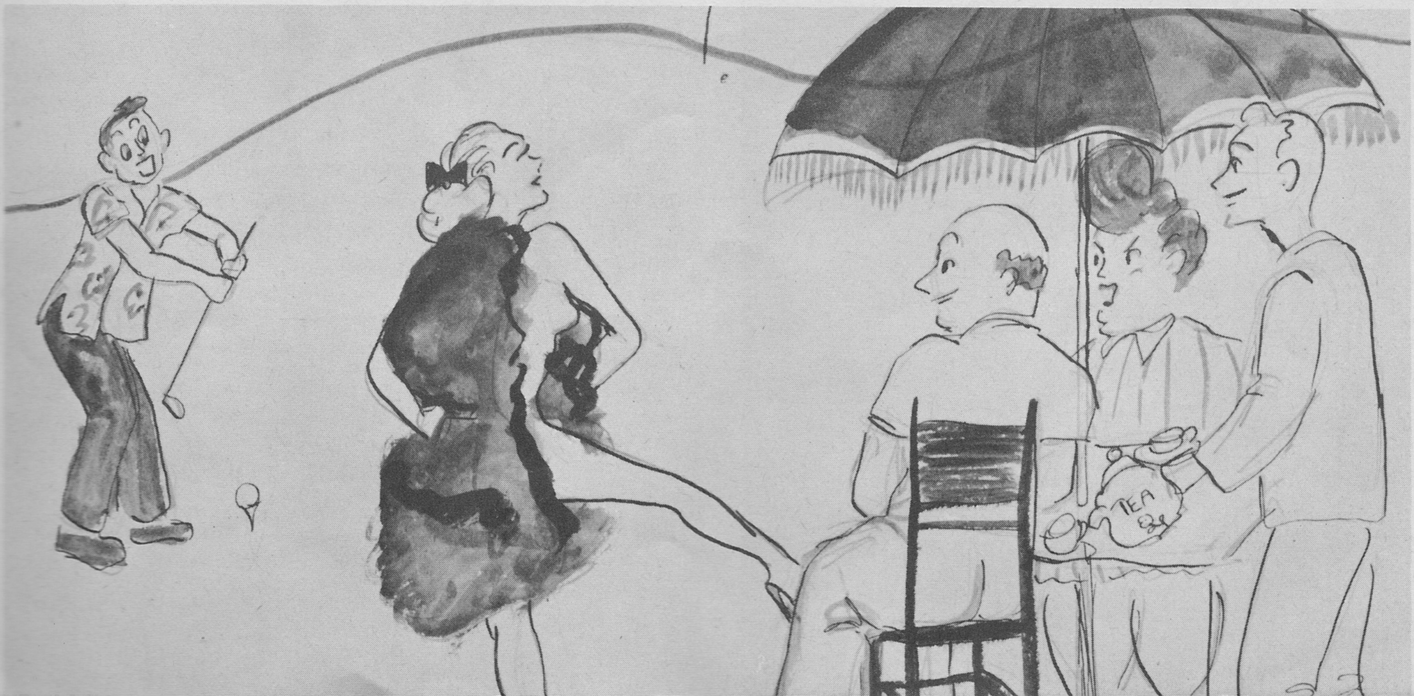
In 1915, at the Academy of Music, Pittsburgh, "Mlle. de Leon", the original "Girl in Blue", did a number in an old-time opera coat and a parasol, she then stripped down to tights and a leotard. This artful beginning, although no stripping was involved as is customarily thought of in its modern sense, can be said to be the start of the "tease" in front of an audience. This number was so popular that one night Mlle. de Leon was not in proper physical shape to appear, so they pinned the costume on the chorus producer Bunny Weldon, and he did an impersonation of her so that the box office would not have to refund any money.



LILI DAWN

Following the popularity of this number, there were many artists who started to do tease numbers with many and varied interpretations. It is worthwhile to mention some of them. Mae Dix originated a tease number with newspapers, reading headlines and having box seat patrons tear strips of the paper during each chorus of her number, gradually getting down to a small piece of paper to cover her anatomy. Margie Bartell did a tease number with a Spanish shawl in a Columbia Wheel show titled "Town Scandals" in 1920.

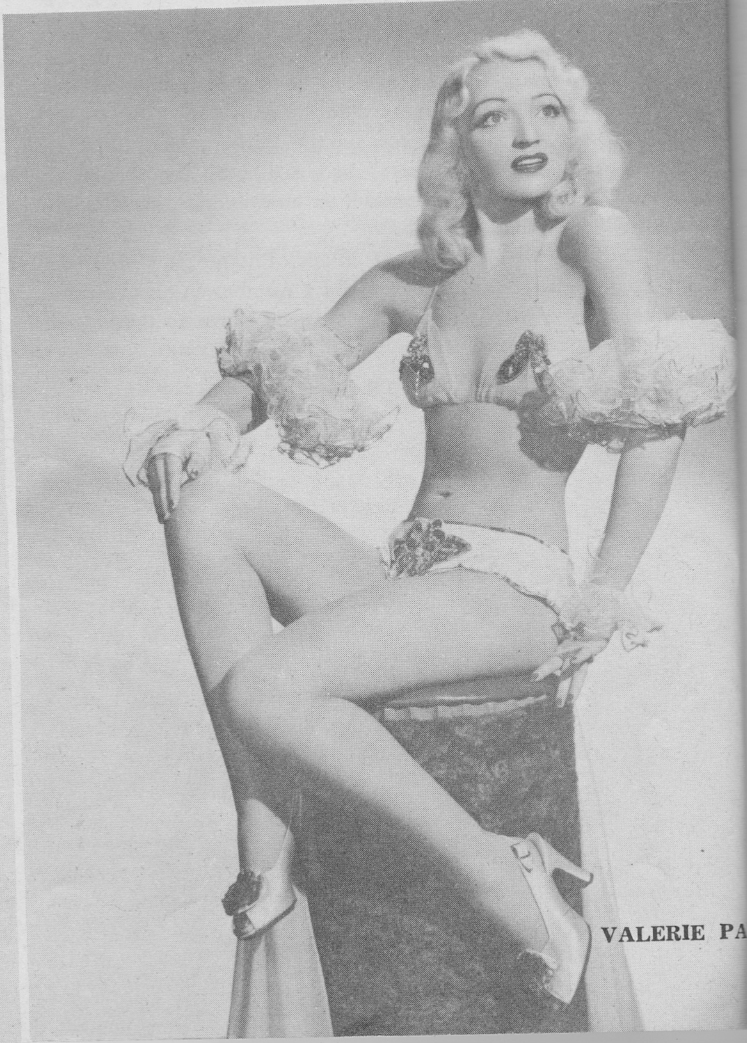
The year 1926 and the personage of Hinda Wausau, is the real beginning of the modern strip. This year marked the beginning of the elimination of the use of full-length tights on the stage, and the showing of the leg in its "naturelle" to the view of the audience.



HINDA WAUSAU

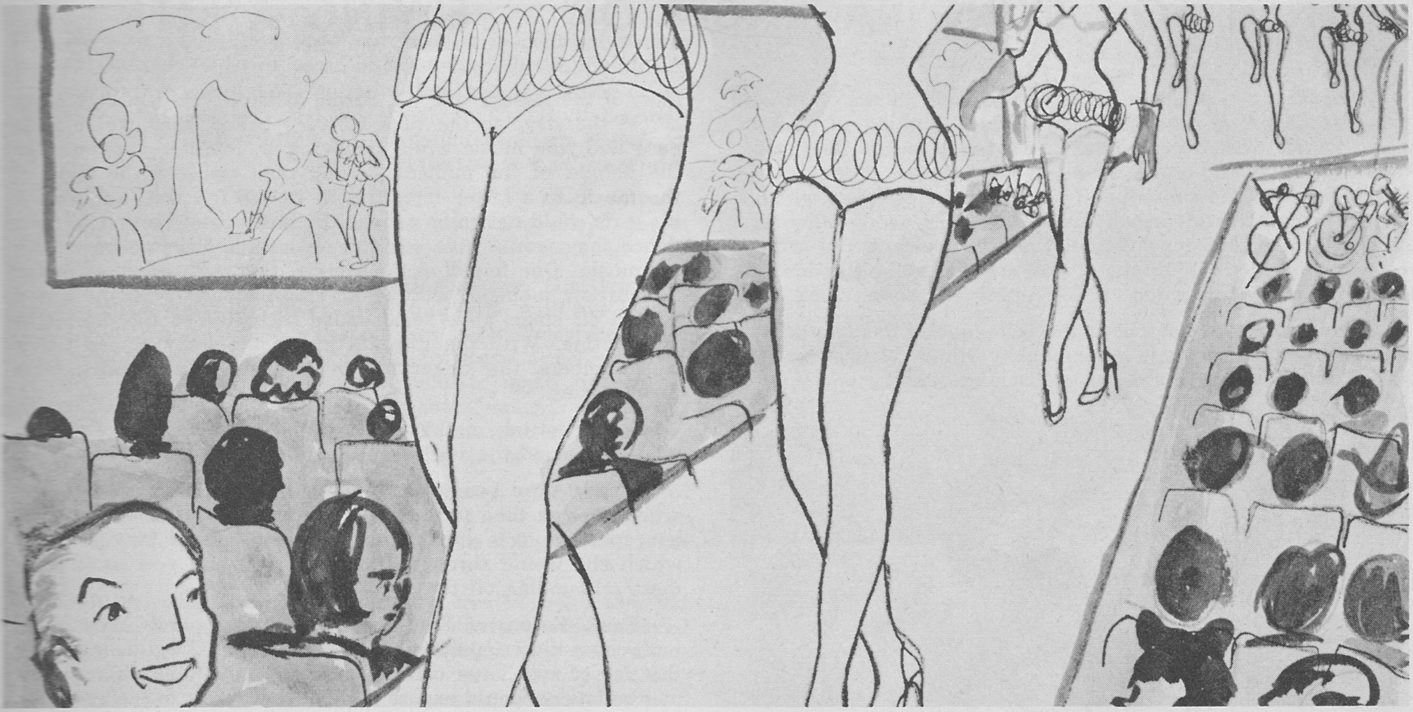
With the elimination of the full-length tights and the continued use of the tease numbers, together with the audiences' preference for the quiver and shimmy numbers, it was inevitable that sooner or later with the constant quiver of the anatomy, that somebody was going to lose or unloose a part of the costume that she was wearing. Well, that's exactly what happened, and the girl it happened to was Hinda Wausau, billed as the "Blonde Bombshell". It happened at the State-Congress Theatre, Chicago. Every week the company playing at the theatre presented a "chorus' girls contest", and Hinda was selected to do a shimmy shaking dance. She wore a short beaded fringe costume under the regular chorus costume. When it was her turn, she was to exit to the wings, remove the regular chorus costume, and do her dance with the brief beaded fringe costume. One performance when she made her exit, the over costume caught on to the fringe, (which was made of glass beads) and she was only able to remove it partly. Her music was playing and the stage manager yelled for her to start dancing. Excited and bewildered, she went on the stage that way. When she started to shimmy, the outer costume was in her way, so she stopped for a moment, and removed it. The applause at the end of her number was thunderous. When she was through, the stage manager bawled her out for "stripping", and yelled, "What are you trying to do, ruin my show?" People began talking about it, however, and the following week the stage manager had so many requests for her to repeat this number, that he asked Hinda to go on again and do the same thing. Thus, the first strip was started. Shortly after that, she stepped out of the chorus line and became a featured attraction. She was immediately signed by Texas Guinan, and appeared for 17 weeks in her New York night club. The rest of her career is history. She became one of the biggest box office attractions in burlesque . . . and still is!

When this information got around, there sprang up in every burlesque theatre all kinds of variations of the strip. By the fall of that year, the beginning of the 1926-27 theatrical season, every stock theatre, and the Mutual Wheel shows carried strip-tease artistes on every one of their shows.



VALERIE PA

RUNWAY TO THE STARS



Said a doctor to his patient, "Where did you get that splinter"? The patient replied: "If you must know, I got it off the runway of a burlesque theatre."

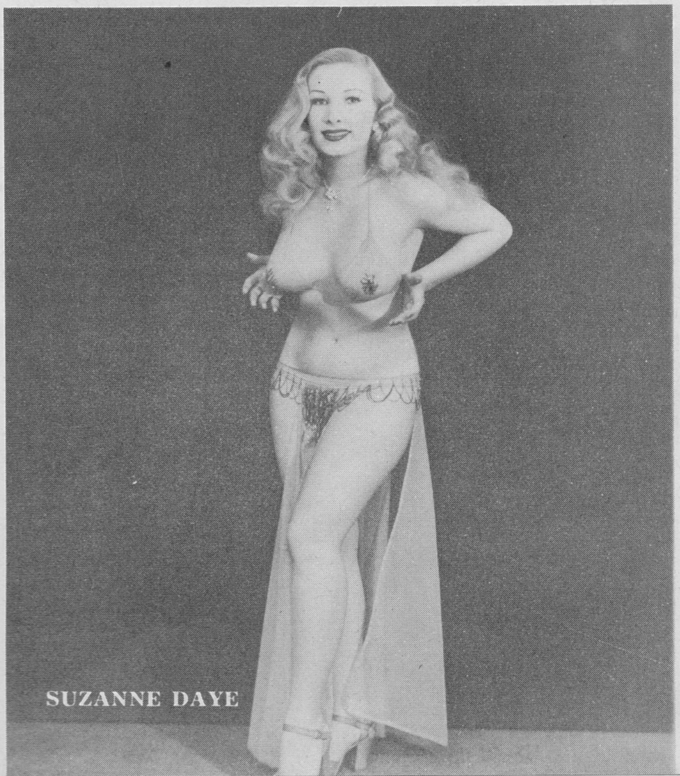
This bit of dialogue is merely a form of introduction to tell of the development of this special type of stage craft, which was identified with nearly all burlesque theatres, at one time or another. While it now has practically disappeared from the theatres housing burlesque, it still is to be found in other places of amusement which cater to the burlesque patron, such as nite clubs and Broadway theatres.

To trace the witchery of this bit of stage craft, runways, is simply to start in the late years of the 19th century, when the honkey tonks of most pioneer western cities, introduced burlesque and its ribald frivolity. These honkey tonks were the forerunner of night clubs, and they would present their form of entertainment on a specially built platform in front of the tables where they served beer and liquors instead of charging admission. Noting that all of the customers were desirous of sitting at the front tables, some ingenious owner built an extended platform through the center of his club, so that more of his customers would be able to sit next to the stage. He would then have his chorus line and female entertainers perform up and down this center platform. With this not so auspicious start, theatre managers copied this center platform idea and built specially constructed runways in many theatres, whether they were burlesque or Broadway houses. These runways were not all center runways, but were constructed in various shapes. Some were built around the orchestra pit in a semi-circle effect, others along the left and right lower boxes, and still others went three-quarters up the center of the lower floor and then split in both directions to form a letter "T".

Al Jolson in his many Broadway productions made use of a runway while performing his special "Mammy" songs. Billy Minsky is credited with having introduced a runway the entire length of the orchestra, specially lighted from underneath so as to present the production with a lot of flash, and give the patrons an even greater "eye full" of the girls' charms.

Today, while most of the theatres have eliminated the use of the runways, some still maintain this form of presentation of their shows. The runways still exist in the night clubs and smaller theatres where the stage is too small to allow the chorus and the accompanying entertainers room to enact their routines. In some night clubs and cocktail bars, where burlesque is presently enjoying a flourishing business, these runways are indispensable, and most of the dancers do most of their work on these wooden platforms.

LOOK OUT NOW! THAT SPLINTER IS LIABLE TO GET INTO **YOUR** FINGER.



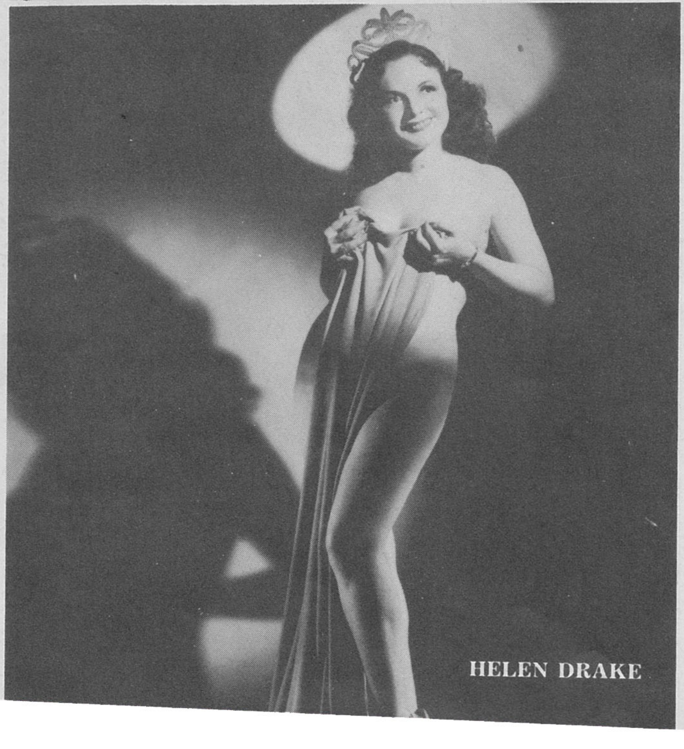
SUZANNE DAYE

"G-STRING"
"NOT FOR TYING PACKAGES OR . . . FLYING A KITE"

When string is mentioned, one immediately thinks of either "tying packages" or "flying a kite". When thinking of "flying a kite" one's thoughts rebound to that day when Benjamin Franklin put his key on the string of one during a thunder and lightning storm; and subsequently discovered electricity, which, with its magnitude of present day uses, gives people all over the world more time for enjoyment and amusement. But when you add the letter "G" to string, you are giving the fun-loving public its first introduction to the American native dance.

Many and varied have been the technique of the strip tease dancers from its inartistic beginning by Hinda Wausau to its present variations by hundreds of disciples. In the beginning, most of the teasers and "G" String artistes would merely romp across the stage to the tune of some ballad, then try to keep pace with the music while removing their outer garments for the delight of the audience. They then changed the style of the music to a faster tempo, such as the fox trot, as some of the girls could not romp or walk to slow music, so that in their dance they would give some semblance of keeping pace with the music. One found, as a necessity, that with the slow ballad type artists, a singer, who would sing melodies over the sound system off stage, gave some added incentive to the dancer in her routine. With the introduction of the fox trot and faster jazz numbers, the singer has been virtually eliminated from these duties.

INEZ CLAIRE


HELEN DRAKE

A "G" string is the patch of respectability between the strip-teaser and the audience.

Gypsy Rose Lee was noted for her "parade number", but when it came time to untie the string to get to the "G" string, her specialty was having her garment full of straight pins, which she would throw to the orchestra, and you could hear them rebounding off the brass section.

Faith Bacon, of Earl Carroll's Vanities, and Sally Rand both claim the origination of the "fan dance". They danced with the use of two large ostrich feathered fans, and with nimble manipulations would expose parts of their body to the audience. At the end of the dance, they would lift both hands upward, and lo and behold . . . there's that "G" string again! Sally Rand also did a dance with a large blown-up balloon, performed in much the same manner as the fan dance.

Rosita Royce introduced her "Dance of the Doves", in which trained doves fly over the stage from the wings and come to roost on her arms and head in a specially designed dance number.

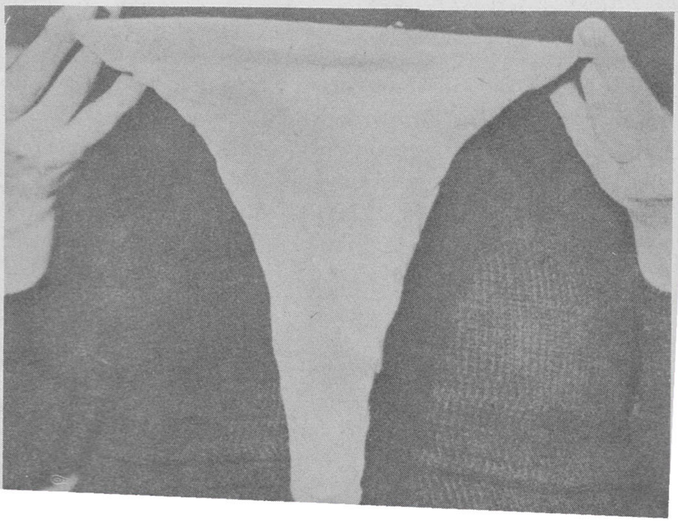
Yvette is credited with introducing the use of a trained parrot in her dance. The parrot would fly around and pick off bits of clothing from her, instead of her taking them off herself . . . but the parrot never could untie the "G" string. Another variation of the above dance is being done with the use of a pet monkey. Thelma White had a trained dog in her act for the same purpose.

Ann Corio, whose fame was not associated with any "props" or animals, but merely on her display of the body beautiful, introduced the art of "How to undress in front of your husband", as her contribution to the art of the American native dance.

Georgia "Dynamite" Sothern introduced "jet propulsion" prior to the aeroplane. Her dance accelerates motion as the prerequisite of her "take off".

"Peaches" is known as the "Queen of Quiver". "It must be jelly, 'cause jam don't shake like that".

Tirza, and her "wine bath", a daring piece of strip tease artistry, performs under a fountain of wine, coming from a



specially prepared stage mechanical device. Dorothy Henry's "milk bath" was along similar lines.

Numerous girls have appeared in other mechanical devices presenting their "G string case" such as: "The Girl in the Moon", who, with the use of a crane, is hoisted over the heads of the audience; "The girl in the fish bowl"; "The Diving Girls", where they introduced the art of strip teasing in a tank of water; "Dance of the silhouette", with the use of a shadowgraph, most recently used by Lotus Du Bois.

Zorita, and her snake, presents an unusual novelty wherein she tries to charm the snake with her sensuous dancing.

Carrie Finnell, once was advertised as the "Girl with the million dollar legs", but has gained more fame with her muscle control dance. In this dance she takes over direct control of her body muscles, and with the use of a tassel attached to her brassieres, she shows the audience how to make "the busts" dance. She never had much use for that "string." Carrie was billed as the "Remote Control Girl", the muscles of her breasts so controlled she can pop one out of her bodice at will.

Evelyn Myers created an optical illusion with the use of mirrors placed in special locations on stage, so as to give the impression that there were a group of girls doing a strip tease in unison.

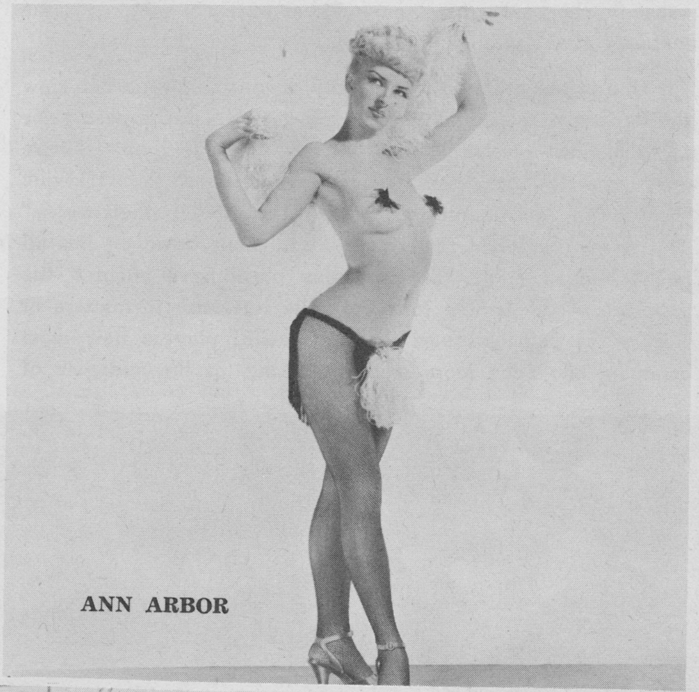
Dagmar, with the use of specially created wardrobe, did the "Dance of the Devil", an interpretive dance which portrayed Mephistopheles (a man) and a woman doing a strip tease dance together.

Other forms of strip teasing require audience participation. They include the coy manner of a stripper kissing bald heads, and leaving the lip rouge impression. The use of garters as giveaways to the audience, and tossing to the audience kisses of the candy variety, cigarettes, gardenias, and photographs.

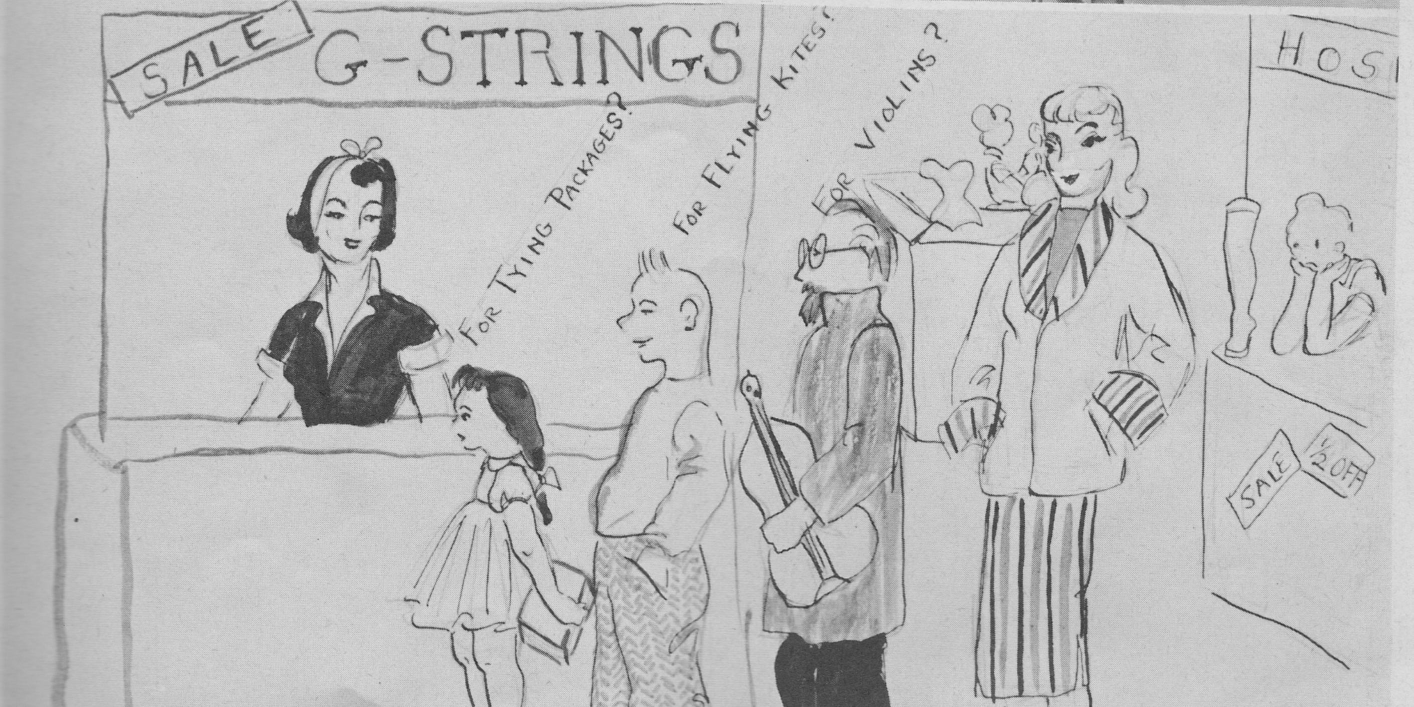
All "G" strings are not of the same color. The Gold "G" string was introduced by Rozelle Rowland, of the three Rowland Sisters, who later tied her wedding string around the Baron D'Empain, and his Paris, France, subways. She was famous for painting her entire body including the "string" in gold paint and doing her dance called, "A Study in Bronze". The use of radium paint is a recent innovation, whereby with the use of special lights and paint, all you see is the string without the body. Then we have the multi-color "G" strings of such Oriental stars as Mei Ling, Amy Fong, May Wong, Sen Lee Fu, and Lotus Wing. The American Indians are also represented by Princess Wah Wah Taysee, and Princess LaHoma.

The presentation of a distinct novelty was the appearance of two sisters, Joan and Jean Carroll, who exposed two "G" strings simultaneously, and they weren't on violins.

PEGGY BOND



ANN ARBOR



THE FUNNY BONE . . . TO CRACK OR NOT TO CRACK

No history of American burlesque, as burlesque is viewed today, and its strict association with the art of stripping and the showing of the leg, can be complete without knowledge of the original foundation of burlesque, the comedians and their skits.

In viewing the entertainment world's newest baby, television, any steady patron of burlesque through the years, or any of the managers or the performers associated with the American burlesque theatre, can well feel proud since TV entertainment has picked as part of its regular programs, a great majority of the bits and blackouts from the burlesque files. One has only to view the comedy programs today seen on television, and find all of the comedians presenting as part of their programs, week in and week out, the same familiar comedy scenes that have passed down through the years of usage on the burlesque stage, but that were not viewed by the **majority** of the public.

One of the reasons the majority of the public did not view the burlesque scenes and comedians was that in the past, prior to 1900, most of the patrons of the burlesque theatres were entirely made up of males. The gentlemen viewed the burlesque theatre as a place of entertainment to go to "to defy their wives." The women snubbed their noses at it. This, however, has all been changed. Since the Broadway plays have adopted the exposing of the female form, and the reference to matters of sex as the principal part of a successful play is now most common, one finds more women making up the audience of a burlesque theatre than even the most successful operator of any of the Columbia burlesque theatres had dared to anticipate. Present statistics prove that more than thirty per cent of the audience of the burlesque type shows are made up of females.

The early comedy of the American burlesque was mostly of the dialect variety, portrayed with grotesque make-up, by comedians who assumed the role of Dutchmen, Irishmen, and Jews. The first to venture away from the standard practice was Billy B. Van, who created the Patsy Bolivar type of comedy. This brand of comedy is best described as the one wherein the other members of the cast would take advantage of the comedian, by the use of bladders and rough treatment, so as to have the audience sympathize with the comedian to draw laughs. The next type of burlesque comedy to be introduced was the Hobo, or Tramp, who was identified with the use of the putty nose and the baggy pants. The eccentric comedians used varied types of make-up and mis-fit clothes. Finally the master of ceremonies type arrived with light comedy appeal.

Some of the eccentric types were portrayed as "dope" characters. The best known portrayer of this variety of comedy was Lew Kelly, who went on to fame in Hollywood portraying the same character. Included among the eccentric type comedians it is worth while mentioning "Bozo" Snyder, who while portraying the character of a tramp, was the first pantomimist in American burlesque.

BLAZE FURY

Most of the comedians found in burlesque have created names, sayings or peculiar mannerisms that identified them to a character. A few are: Lou Costello, of Abbott and Costello, "I'm a bad boy"; Joe Penner, "Wanna Buy A Duck?"; Jack Pearl, "Vas You Dere, Sharlie!"; Billy Hagan, "Cheese 'n' Crackers"; Billy Gilbert, "The sneeze"; Rags Ragland, "Say No More"; Bert Lahr, "Oh Boy, Oh Boy"; "Sliding" Billy Watson and his peculiar slide; Phil Silvers, "Love That Boy"; Leon Errol's stagger; Jim Barton's drunk; Dave Marion's Snuffy the Cabman; Al Reeves, "Give me credit"; Johnny Weber, "Sandy Beach Papa"; Alexander Carr, "Toplitsky says"; Sam Howe, "That's my horse"; Lew Hearn, "I wanna suit with a belt in the back"; Billy (Scratch) Wallace; (To the gallery) "Hi gang"; Charles (Kewpie) Kemper and his lisp; Bennie (Wop) Moore, "My Little Rosa"; Billy (Beeftrust) Watson; Richard (Shorty) McAllister, "Stinky" Fields; Fred (Falls) Binder; Charles (Peanuts) Bohn; Jack (Peanuts) Mann; Harry (Elmer) Conley; Harry (Wurst) Seymour; Tommy (Scurvy) Miller; Slim Timblin; Harry (Hello Jake) Fields; "Looney" Lewis; Billy (Bumps) Mack; Manny King, "Hasta Gotsa Go"; Walter (Shultz, the Butcher) Brown; Bob ("Gate in the puss") Carney; Joe Besser, "Oh, You Crazy You"; "Bozo" Snyder.

"Black Face" comedy in burlesque was portrayed by a number of comedians, outstanding among them were: Jim Barton, Slim Timblin, and Hap Freyer. However, there are a number of popular colored performers, who gained fame in the amusement field, and who received their schooling in burlesque. To mention the most noteworthy: Dusty Fletcher, of "Open The Door Richard" fame; Eddie Green, of "Duffy's Tavern"; "Pigmeat" Markham; John "Spider Bruce" Mason; Hattie McDaniels and James Basquette, both of whom have subsequently been Academy Award winners in motion pictures.

BETTE ROSE

MYRNA DEAN

WINNIE GARRETT

THE STRAIGHT MAN
"The Other Side of the Crack"

(Comedian singing to Straight Man)

"Like a Baby needs its Mother
Like an Oyster needs its Stew,
Like a Girlie needs her Feller,
That's how I need you.
Like Corn Beef needs its Cabbage,
And a Captain needs his Crew,
So you see—we all need someone—
And that someone I need is You!" (The Straight Man!)

If you didn't wear suspenders or a belt, the upkeep of your trousers would be somewhat of a problem. If the ladies didn't wear their garter belt the upkeep of their stockings would be somewhat of a problem. So it is with the comedians in a scene or bit. If the comedian were not sure of support from his straight man, he might not be so funny. The "straight" man has no relation to being honest or standing erect, but is the gentleman who "throws" the cues and "feeds" the lines to the comedian. In show parlance he is known as the "straight". He is introduced to you as being on the other end of the comedy cracks. Let him be known as "The other side of the crack."

Of all the noteworthy and talented straight men who have appeared in burlesque, there is one who cannot be overlooked, and that is Jean Bedini, who, in his many years of doing his own juggling act, was the support and discoverer of some of the greatest comedians. The following credits are due him: he discovered Ted Healy; he found George White, while he was playing amateur nights in Toronto; he gave Eddie Cantor his first chance in show business; he guided the destiny of Joe Cook while he was in burlesque; and through his wonderful support of Bobby Clark and Paul McCullough, he built a whole show around them, which gave them the vehicle which moved them ahead to become stars in Broadway and London successes.

The straight man can be classified either as the aggressive, domineering type, or the light comedy type. In the latter type there have been many who have gone on from burlesque to higher fields in entertainment, because of the experience gained in the burlesque "college" of entertainment. Among them we find: Bud Abbott, the straight half of the famous comedy team of Abbott and Costello; Robert Alda, who made the jump from burlesque to stardom in motion pictures by portraying George Gershwin in "Rhapsody in Blue", and is now making a name for himself as the star of the Broadway hit "Guys and Dolls"; Dick Dana, who ably assisted Bobby Clark after his partner, Paul McCullough, passed away; John Grant, who has helped write the scripts for Abbott and Costella's films; Ben Bard, early associated with Jack Pearl, and who now has a dramatic school in Hollywood.

"The other side of the crack" does not always have to be of male gender, there are females who carry on this work playing opposite the comedians. They are known as the straight women. Outstanding among them we find Alice Kennedy, who, with her work at the side of "Mike Sachs", has been the foil for many of his laugh provoking skits, and Vinnie Phillips, who graduated to play the lead in "Tobacco Road".

JUNE MARCH

"PACKAGES AND SUR-PRIZES"

Granted that the patron of burlesque comes to the theatre for comedy bits, singing, dancing, and the display of legs, "G" strings, and beautiful female forms, they are always treated to something extra. Some of the steady patrons, who have taken to burlesque because they find in it the type of entertainment they most prefer, would probably like to have it eliminated; to others it is as much part of the show as any of the other features. (There are some patrons of any sport or amusement that have objections.) When you go to a circus, peanuts for the elephants are a necessity. What good would a movie be without popcorn? In burlesque there is presented to you the prize package.

Candy-dly speaking, prior to every burlesque show, you will find vendors of candy, soft drinks, ice cream, magazines, opera glasses, etc. Such is the case at all sporting events, at all race tracks, at all motion picture houses and theatres. What then is the difference that makes candy selling at the burlesque theatre something extra? It is the manner in which the appeal for the sale of the merchandise is offered to the public. The vendor has a special spiel or pitch for the audience. For the purpose of obtaining larger sales there usually is a prize or "giveaway" item connected with the items offered for sale. To whet the appetite of the patron for his merchandise, the vendor at times exaggerates the value of the giveaway.

This accommodation of merchandise being offered at public events has been copied in many degrees from the burlesque theatre. It was first introduced in the honkey tonks. Now it is found at every type of entertainment and public event. The concessionaire in burlesque is like the "angel" of a Broadway show. It is he, who during the course of years has helped the theatre operator tide himself over during bad times, and has helped many an operator get his start. This does not only hold true in the burlesque field, but in other lines of entertainment. Only recently the re-financing of one of the Major League Ball Clubs was done through the aid of the concessionaire. The only distinction of the vendor in burlesque, as compared to other vendors, is in the articles for sale, and the method of sale, all the rest of the items connected with the concession are the same wherever you go.

GERRY GERMAINE

AMY FONG

MEET the "MEAT" of the SHOW

The glorification of girls by such producers of musical comedies and revues as Flo Zigfeld, Earl Carroll, the Shuberts, and George White has given show business its sex, and just as sex is here to stay, in real life, it is here to stay in show business. Where then do all the girls, who later become stars, originate? Ninety-five per cent of them come from the ranks of the chorus girls, the backbone of any burlesque show.

Any girl who is not too bashful to expose her calf in public, can become a burlesque queen, and what girl is? Take a good look, on your next visit to the seashore, and you will see an exposure of calves and legs in scanty bathing suits that will have your eyes popping.

The majority of girls finding their way into the burlesque field come from small towns with aspirations for making a career of show business, and with the hope that they can be elevated to stardom. Some of them, in their early age, have tried to develop their talent in singing, musical instrumentation, dramatics or dancing. Making the rounds of the casting offices for the Broadway shows in New York, or the motion picture studios in Hollywood, they try to immediately reach the top without the benefit of professional experience. There are a few exceptions where ambitious youngsters break through the barrier of the booking agents and casting offices to secure the chance that they seek, but the majority find it very difficult to get their opportunity. That does not stop all the future aspirants to fame and fortune. The publicity attendant to the one amateur who reaches stardom without the benefit of professional experience, fires the ambitions of the others. What, then, becomes of these girls who do not get their chance? They wander around, and lacking the financial means to maintain themselves, usually turn to burlesque, where they find that they can secure work and at the same time gain experience to start them in the profession that they chose.

A girl in burlesque has only to be willing. In every theatre there are teachers of the dance who are known as "number producers", some male and some female, but all having had success in some part of show business, who take the amateurs, teach them how to gracefully walk and then dance, and teach them the art of make-up to start them on a stage career.

The average life of a chorus girl in burlesque is about five years. It is during this time that those who have talent are picked from their lowly standing as chorus girls, and given their chance to go up the ladder, and become a principal. Sometimes the choice of who should be given this opportunity is done by the burlesque patrons themselves in novel chorus girl contests. These contests were known as: bathing beauty contests, which were presented during the time when nudity was not as prevalent as it is today on the bathing beaches; garter contests, where the girls displayed their legs by the artful use of garters, and by pick-out numbers, where each girl in the chorus was given an opportunity to display her talents, whether it be dancing, singing, shimmy shaking, or straight dramatics, and sometimes even comedy impersonations. The present day trend is for theatres to run "strip-tease contests", solely for the reason that the art of strip teasing brings better financial results.

In burlesque every chorus girl is an understudy for the female stars of the show. They are all given an opportunity in case some of the principal performers, for some reason or other, are unable to appear.

Most of the stars of burlesque of yesteryear and today got their first start in the chorus, and attribute their success to their early training. We find among them Fannie Brice, Sally Rand, Gypsy Rose Lee, Ann Corio, Charmaine, Margie Hart, Georgia Sothern and Barbara Stanwyck.

BURLESQUE'S CORRIDOR OF FAME

ISADORE HIRST

In the history of burlesque from 1900 to its present day, there have been three outstanding circuit operators, all of whom contributed much to the American theatre. They were Sam Scribner, of the Columbia Circuit; I. H. Herk, of the Mutual Circuit, and Isadore "Izzy" Hirst, of the Independent and Hirst Circuit.

Starting out as a candy butcher in Philadelphia, then as usher, treasurer, and owner-operator of the Gayety Theatre, Hirst built his own empire, starting with the one theatre and progressing to the largest chain and circuit operation in the burlesque field.

The circuit using his name has been in existence longer than any other in the history of burlesque. His close association with the performers and his humane treatment of them was one of the main reasons for his steady growth.

Today there are many theatres being operated under his corporate name that stand as a monument to him.

He was known as the "King" of burlesque!

CHARLES M. FELDHEIM (UNO)

"Do you know "Uno"?

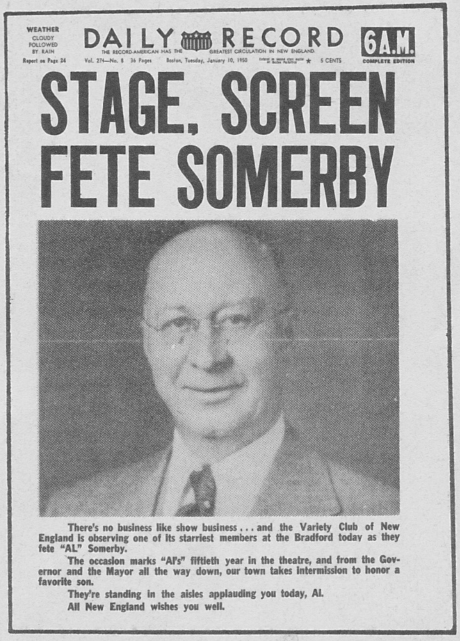
If no, you should know "Uno" Tongue twisting, isn't it?

Charles M. Feldheim, better known as "Uno", has been in the newspaper reporting business since 1892—almost sixty years devoted to public service and the theatrical profession.

He began his newspaper career as circulation manager of a horse race and sporting sheet known as "Spirit of the Times". Later he published his own paper, "City Life", wherein he first launched his "U-notes" by "Uno". His column appeared in the Sunday Record, Bruce Duffus' Weekly Burlesque, Morning Telegraph, Uno's Theatre Digest, The Weekly New York Press, Greater Show World Weekly, and Nelse's Theatrical Bulletin.

From 1934, to the present, and still going strong, his "U-notes" appear in "The Billboard", the weekly magazine of show business.

Having been associated with burlesque for over half a century, it was only natural to gather from him most of the early history of burlesque. One of the most pleasant personalities connected with burlesque over a great length of time, and loved by everybody in the profession, "Uno's" definition of burlesque is, "Burlesque is the acting or action on stage before an audience, a performance by comedians aided by straight men that ridicules, hokumizes, and satirizes the original."



WEATHER
CLOUDY
FOLLOWED
BY RAIN
Report on Page 24

DAILY RECORD

THE RECORD-AMERICAN HAS THE GREATEST CIRCULATION IN NEW ENGLAND

6 A.M.
COMPLETE EDITION

Vol. 274—No. 8 36 Pages Boston, Tuesday, January 10, 1950 ★ 5 CENTS

STAGE, SCREEN FETE SOMERBY

There's no business like show business . . . and the Variety Club of New England is observing one of its starriest members at the Bradford today as they fete "AL" Somerby.

The occasion marks "Al's" fiftieth year in the theatre, and from the Governor and the Mayor all the way down, our town takes intermission to honor a favorite son.

They're standing in the aisles applauding you today, Al.

All New England wishes you well.

AL SOMERBY

The above reproduction of the Boston Daily Record of Tuesday, Jan. 10, 1950, introduces to you "Al" Somerby.

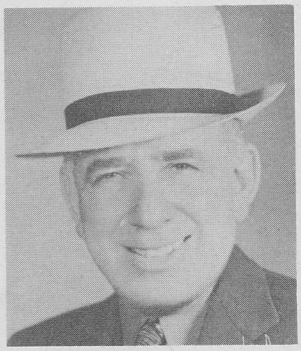
Al has been in the burlesque business for 51 years, as treasurer, manager and owner-operator. All this time he has been associated with the oldest burlesque theatre in America, the Howard Athaeneum, Boston, America's monument to burlesque. Now in its 106th consecutive season as a playhouse, it is the most successful burlesque theatre in continuous operation in America. It is known as the "Old Howard".

Al says, "Burlesque is the poor man's musical comedy".

He believes that burlesque will always be with us.

It was at the "Old Howard" where the theatrical expression, "They were hanging by the rafters" originated.

MILTON SCHUSTER



"Be a Booster".
"If you want people, or you people want work, phone Milt".

With the above phrases there is introduced to you, Milton Schuster, artists' representative, who is personally acquainted with more performers than any theatrical agent in the country.

Milt started in the theatrical business in 1898 as an usher in the People's Theatre, Cincinnati. He has been an artists' representative since 1920, and has been associated with burlesque, with few interruptions, when he operated his own musical show, since 1898.

As a comedian in Heuck and Fennessy's "Ramblers", Schuster worked with the Burke Brothers and Grace LaRue. He also appeared in Irwin's Majestics, Miner's Bohemians, and Krause's "Moonlight Maids". He also appeared in one-night burlesque shows which were the originators of the term "Turkeys".

Milt's definition of burlesque: "A satire of any event".

BILLY ("CHEESE 'N' CRACKERS") HAGAN

BILLY (CHEESE 'N' CRACKERS) HAGAN

San Francisco born, Billy Hagan is the son of city boiler inspector. His early days were spent as a prize-fighter, having been Pacific Coast welter-weight champion.

Billy has been one of the old faithfuls of burlesque comedy. Sometimes called the "Prince of pratt-fall" and "Burlesque's funny man number one", Billy, whose nickname of "Cheese 'n' Crackers" was borrowed from his father, is one comedian who refuses to leave the burlesque field for other forms of amusement. Having had many an opportunity to get into radio and Broadway shows, Billy has always turned the offers down, but would rather remain in burlesque as long as the public does not tire of him. As Billy puts it, "I'm at the top of my field. I make as much dough as I could any place else. I'm not in the business for breaks, and I'm happy in burlesque. I'll be with it as long as there are people who enjoy a good laugh."

It is from Hagan's mild mannered father that he learned the "Cheese 'n' Crackers" phrase that is his trade mark. Whenever Billy's father would hit his thumb with a hammer, or was otherwise moved to use an expletive, he'd exclaim, "Cheese 'n' Crackers". Once, when Hagan was on stage, he was stuck for a word to express vehemence. He thought of his father and drawled a naseled "Cheese 'n' Crackers". The audience loved it so much that he kept the phrase as his identification.

Most Hagan comedy is situation humor involving "business", a burlesque synonym for mugging and mannerisms. Billy's make-up has always consisted of a big putty nose, which is as much his identity as the words, "Cheese 'n' Crackers". This nose and his baggy pants and his high pitched voice is enough to tell you that it is Billy, even if he didn't say "Cheese 'n' Crackers".

Billy Hagan, who is married and has a son, Billy, Jr., lives in the "off season" in Rochester, New York. He has this to say about burlesque: "It is the best school in the world for timing and mugging. You have to learn how to act with your eyes. The eyes are very important and you have to learn how to time your 'business' to get the best possible audience reaction. I've seen the ups and downs of the burlesque business. When it's down for a little while it always comes back."

And with the confidence of a man who knows, and the smug satisfaction of a guy who has bet a hundred to one on a sure thing, he adds: "Burlesque will never die."

NADINE

BILLY (SCRATCH) WALLACE

Billy "Scratch" Wallace has been a tramp comedian in burlesque for 54 years, and expects to continue indefinitely.

He acquired the nickname at the old Gayety in Philadelphia, about 37 years ago, when he and his partner, George Carroll, were engaged to replace Bobby Clark and Paul McCullough in Jean Bedini's show, "Peek-a-Boo". In one of the sketches in this show, Bobby Clark played a tramp called "Scratch", and his partner, McCullough, was called "Itch". Billy took over the "Scratch" role and has kept it for his ever since. With it he has achieved a place among burlesque's immortals.

MIKE SACHS

An institution in the theatre, Mike has been in show business since the age of five, when he appeared with his parents. Has been in burlesque, vaudeville, and production shows. About 1910 or 1911, he worked with Fred Allen in what was called the horse and buggy circuit—Gorman's Circuit.

Mike's sister, Grace, also was in show business having appeared with that old-time favorite comedian, Ben Welch, doing a "pick out" number called, "Becky Stay In Your Own Back Yard."

One time, went Mike went down town to see Ben's show, Welch gave him a copy of the number and permission to use it in a "tab" show.

Later on in life, Welch became the first comedian, who, despite the loss of his eyesight, was able to continue to amuse the fun-loving public. The coincidence of this anecdote is that approximately six years ago, Sachs lost the use of his eyes, but has continued, despite his physical handicap, to appear on the burlesque stages with just as much vim and vigor as a youngster. Seeing him on the stage one can never guess that Sachs is so handicapped. Being so familiar with the nation's burlesque theatres, and knowing his routines, he has found it possible to continue with his service to the public, making them laugh. The comedian never misses an opportunity to help brighten the lives of others. Appearing with him for a good many years has been Alice Kennedy, his able assistant, who guides him to and from the wings of each theatre. Once on stage, his actions and ad libbing need no help.

Despite being in the spotlight for more than a half century, Mike treasures the memory of two incidents above all others. Both occurred during his period of blindness.

One was when Irving Berlin after witnessing one of the burlesque shows and learning that Mike was blind, came back stage to compliment him on his unconquerable courage.

The other was when Mike was traveling on a train from New York to Philadelphia to make an appearance. He met Eddie Cantor going to the same city for a benefit performance for the "March of Dimes", and Eddie made Mike take over his compartment, which he so generously relinquished.

One of the highlights of Mike's career was his appearance on the radio show "We The People". This was brought about by the fact that despite his affliction he had continued his career.

Only recently Mike was presented by the Mayor of Newark, N. J., with a braille watch, as a reward for his setting an example to other blind persons to continue their usefulness in society.

"Scratch" Wal

BILLY ("SCRATCH") WALLACE

MIKE SACHS

ARTHUR CLAMAGE

From the automobile center of the world, comes Arthur Clamage, the Midwest's burlesque impressario, with a background of 54 years in the theatrical business, 45 of them associated in burlesque productions. Starting out as a messenger boy and telegraph operator, he was delivering a telegram to the back stage of a theatre, when he became so engrossed with the female form, that he decided to throw away his messenger boy's uniform, and make the stage his vocation. He tried to do comedy, but found directing the comedians much easier.

He has been operating theatres for 42 years in the following cities: Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Omaha, Seattle, Victoria, British Columbia, and Vancouver, Canada. Also San Francisco, Los Angeles, Kansas City, Toledo, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, St. Louis and Detroit.

Just as Detroit and the automobile industry puts out new models of cars every year, Arthur in his years in the theatrical business as performer, owner, manager, and producer, has developed more people in the burlesque field from amateurs than any other burlesque manager or producer in its entire history. He has given more chorus girls the chance to become strip tease artistes in the last 25 years than any other person in burlesque.

Clamage's definition of burlesque: "A travesty on Broadway productions with lots of girls, vaudeville acts, and musical numbers."

SCARLETT KELLY

JAMES LAKE

Colonel James Lake, Washington's institution of the theatre, has been in the theatrical business 60 years and is still going strong.

Colonel Jimmy has held such odd jobs as usher, treasurer, producer, owner-manager, and performer.

From his many years as a performer in burlesque, where he was one of the outstanding straight men and light comedians, he has become Washington's most sought-after after-dinner speaker, raconteur, and sports announcer.

There isn't a sports figure in the world, or a newspaper columnist in the country, who doesn't know Colonel Jimmy. His witicisms and stories (gathered during the years, part of which were spent writing a column in the New York Telegraph, titled "Lake's Likeable Logic") are always in demand.

Whenever the occasion brings to Washington any notable person, his first social request is, "Introduce me to Jimmy Lake".

He is "Mr. Washington", and rightly deserves this title. While operating the Gayety burlesque theatre in Washington, all of the political figures made it a point to come down to listen to Jimmy's anecdotes, and to see the "Girlie" show.

Despite all of his activities, Jimmy finds time to operate his own restaurant and cafe on Ninth St., next to the Gayety Theatre, and to help in all types of charitable events.

It was during World War I, that Lake staged two benefits for the bonus marchers, who were sleeping under improvised tents along Pennsylvania Ave. and the Washington Speedway.

As Jimmy relates, "The beds consisted of 'Mother Earth', and sawed off broom handles served as posts for improvised canopies.

"Benefit number one was staged at the Gayety Theatre. Through the solicitation of Major General Pelham D. Glassford, it was a 'quickie', as the boys had no smoking material or the price of a cake of soap. Incidentally Major General Glassford was Chief of Police and a veteran soldier, and he knew from experience the value of cigarettes, pipe of tobacco, and a cake of soap, to the men. The Major called me on a Monday, and on Wednesday we gave a midnight show to the grand total of $528.62—the Major was tickled, but not I. We had money for cigarettes and pipe tobacco, but needed car fare for the unfortunates who could not raise the necessary train fare to get them back home. So, I called Clark Griffith, president of the American League Ball Club, who cheerfully donated the ball park. I then promoted a gigantic all sports show with the greatest galaxy of stars that any individual could possibly assemble and the grand total of money collected was $7,143.20. There was no admission fee, but every donation was spent on transportation for the unfortunates who wished to return to their native cities. This was truly a grand contribution of sports and burlesque artists, and those that came from New York paid their own expenses. The event played to 30,000 people. It was a grand triumph for burlesque and the famous Gayety."

It is said that Colonel Lake has more friends than Stalin has enemies.

Jimmy's definition of burlesque: "The preparatory school of show business."

RIALTO
MINSKY'S
BURLESQUE
PAT HALLADAY
RIALTO
MINSKY'S BURLESQUE
PAT "AMBER" HALLADAY
EXTRA ADDED DARDY ORLANDO
SCREEN: "HARBOR OF MISSING MEN"
Air Conditioned

PAT "AMBER" HALLADAY

"MINSKYS"

The word "Minsky" is as much "Burlesque" as a definition of burlesque. No history of burlesque would be complete without a review of the Minsky dynasty.

To many of the public, the name "Minsky" has become synonymous with the word "burlesque".

Who, then, are the Minskys?

The man who made the name great was Billy Minsky, whose fame was achieved in the 1920's in the operation of the National Winter Garden on Second Avenue, and the Apollo on 125th Street, New York City. He was the first to bring burlesque to the Times Square section in the operation of the Republic Theatre. It was he who stole "nudity" from the Broadway stage so that burlesque might compete against musical comedy.

Upon his untimely death in 1932, the Minsky prestige continued with his three brothers, Herbert K., Morton, and Abe. The Minskys split into two forces. Brothers Herbert and Morton being one faction, and brother Abe the other.

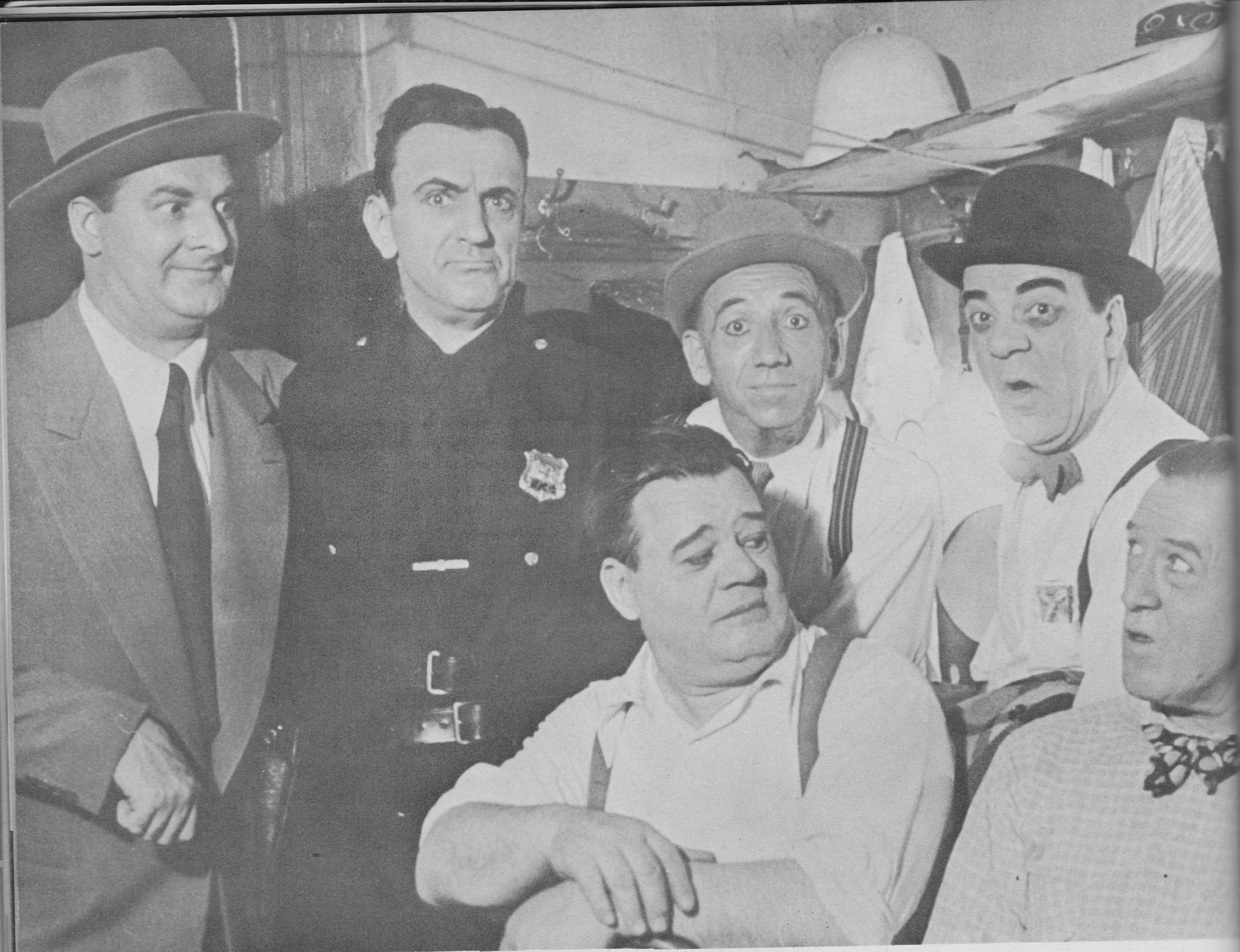
Brother Abe, however, took to his side his son, Harold, to help him in his enterprises. Abe and Harold operated at the Gayety on Broadway, and the Apollo on 125th Street, while the other faction operated at the Republic.

Brothers Herbert and Morton succeeded in expanding their operations to include Brooklyn, Boston, Baltimore, Albany, Newark, and Philadelphia. They formed the Supreme Circuit and presented burlesque shows in Miami, Florida, and Hollywood.

Harold Minsky, after the fall of burlesque in New York, went on to New Orleans. Presently, he is operating in Chicago and Miami Beach. His father has since passed away, and uncles, Herbert and Morton, are no longer in the burlesque business.

GEORGIA SOTHERN

ROSE LA ROSE



ZORITA

"PEEP SHOW"

Introducing from left to right: Ben Hamilton, Dick Dana, Harry Conley, Jack Mann, "Bozo" Snyder, and "Red" Marshall, members of Michael Todd's "Peep Show" cast, a smash Broadway musical hit for months; and a good example of how Broadway looks to burlesque for its comedians. This entire group received their training on the burlesque stages of the country. While some have credits of other Broadway shows, they have for the most part entertained exclusively in the field of burlesque.

Dick Dana has appeared in such hit shows as: "Star and Garter", "As The Girls Go", and "Follow The Girls"; Red Marshall starred in "Panama Hattie", Harry Conley was in "Rice and Old Shoes", Jack Mann was featured in "One Touch Of Venus" and "High Kickers", and "Bozo" Snyder and Ben Hamilton have made frequent appearances in the vaudeville houses of the country.

Bobby Clark, who had charge of the comedy of "Peep Show", also was, at one time, a burlesque comedian. Two other stars of "Peep Show", whose pictures are not in the above group are June Allen and Lilly Christine, "The Cat Girl," both of whom are burlesque graduates.

ALUMNI

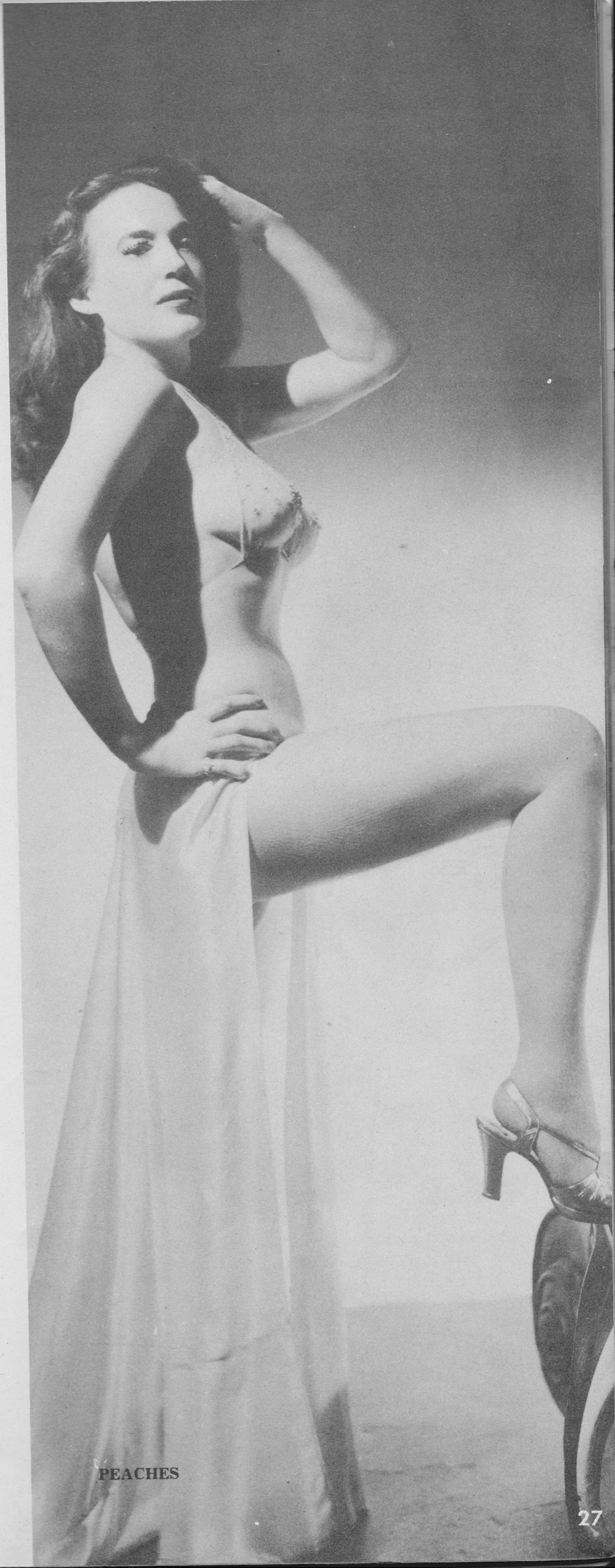
In the entire history of entertainment, there probably is no word in the entertainment field that is more frowned upon than the word burlesque, but none which has more magic. Burlesque, frequently called the poor man's follies, has produced more stars, who went on to great heights in entertaining the American public, than any other branch of show business.

Burlesque is a combination of the Minor League of Broadway, radio, television, and motion pictures, and is the "Junior College" of all striving entertainers, who wish to add their little bit to the most needed form of relaxation . . . entertainment.

When the word burlesque glitters from electric or neon signs, it brings to mind all the gayety, girls, and comedians associated with it. To go down the list of favorite entertainers who had graduated from this "Junior College" to become outstanding entertainers in other fields of amusement, would be quite a task. However, we shall attempt to acquaint you with some of the more noted ones who made their start in this truly American form of entertainment.

American burlesque has always been the best school for the comedian. It is on the stages of the burlesque theatres that he has learned to attract the attention of all types of audiences, whether they be rowdy or otherwise. Below are listed some of those who graduated from the ranks to present to you, your dad, or your mother, many an eventful and laugh-provoking evening: Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor, Leon Errol, Lew Kelly, Roger Imhoff, Avon Comedy Four, Ben Blue, Joe Penner, Weber and Fields, James Barton, Ben Bard, Jack Pearl, Cliff Hall, Ben Welch, Gus Hill, Bobby Clark, Paul McCullough, W. C. Fields, Billy Gilbert, Sam Bernard, Louis Mann, Bert Fitzgibbons, Sid Stone, Jack Diamond, John Grant, Sid Fields, Pat Rooney, Tony Pastor, Joey Faye, Walter Huston, Hal Skelly, Roscoe Ails, Jay C. Flippen, Milton Frome, Louis Calhern, Looney Lewis, Billy Vine, Jan Murray, Bobby Vail, Bobby Morris, The Four Mortons, Bert Baker, Loney Haskell, Rice and Barton, Fox and Ward, Bickel and Watson, George Beban, Billy Arlington, Willie Howard, Chick Chandler, Joe Cook, Fred Stone, Dave Montgomery, Buster Keaton, Don Barclay, Hank Henry, Charlie King, Alexander Carr, Lester Allen, Watson and Cohen, Geo. E. Stone, Rex Weber, Gus Edwards, Jean Bedini, Eddie Green, Slim Timblin, Shaw and Lee, Charles Winninger, Harry Fox, Charlie Murray, Will Rogers, Ed Wynn, Gabby Hayes, Red Skelton, "Beeftrust" Watson, Bert Lahr, Joe E. Brown, Lew Hearn, "Bozo" Snyder, Dave Marion, Frank Finney, Bob Alda, Harry Morris, Solly Ward, Harry K. Morton, Tom Howard, George Sheldon, Johnny Weber, Gallagher and Shean, Ted Healy, Billy B. Van, Richy Craig, Gus Shilling, Phil Silvers, Jackie Gleason, Joe Yule, Rags Ragland, Charles Kemper, and Abbott and Costello.

The above are the comedians who graduated from burlesque. A partial list of the female stars who appeared in burlesque includes: Sophie Tucker, Fannie Brice, Polly Moran, Ethel Shutta, Watson Sisters, Belle Baker, Blossom Seely, Rose Sydell, Mollie Williams, Grace LaRue, Vinnie Henshaw, Lillian Russell, and Barbara Stanwyck. Together with such famous strip-teasers as: Rose LaRose, Georgia Sothern, Hattie McDaniels, Margie Hart, Carrie Finnell, Ann Corio and Gypsy Rose Lee.



PEACHES

FRANCINE

YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Some of the titles of the burlesque shows in the past can be gleaned from the following names of shows used on the Columbia and Mutual Circuits: "Black and White Revue", "Models and Thrills", "Peek-a-Boo", "Bathing Beauties", "Abe Reynold's Rounders", "Step on It", "Powder Puff Frolic", "Talk of the Town", "Seven-Eleven", "O. K. Show", "Monkey Shines", "Chuckles", "Follies of the Day", "Girl Club", "Rarin' To Go", "Miss Tobasco", "Wine, Women and Song", "Let's Go", "Silk Stocking Revue", "Look Us Over", "Flappers of 19--", "Lucky Sambo", "Best Show in Town", "Happy Moments", "Gay Old Time", "Fashion Parade", "Golden Crooks", "La Revue Parisienne", "Speedy Steppers", "Tempters", "Step Lively Girls", "Night Hawks", "Kuddling Kuties", "Hurry Up", "Naughty Nifties", "Innocent Maids", "Pleasures", "Jazz Time Revue", "Sugar Babies", "French Models", "Stolen Sweets", "Kandy Kids", "Make It Peppy", "Giggles", "'Round the Town", "Red Hot", "Speed Girls", "Laffin' Thru", "Whiz Bang Revue", "Band Box Revue", "Moonlight Maids", "Hotsy Totsy Girls", "Hey! Ho!", "Step Along", "Whirl of Girls", "Hollywood Scandals", "Girlie Girls", "Chick Chick", "Happy Hours", "Dancing Around", "Night Life", "Big Sensation", "Sporting Widows", "High Flyers", "Broadway Brevities", "'Round the World Revue", "The Merry Whirl", "Give and Take", "New York to Paris", "Midnight Frolics", "Parisian Flappers", "Nite Life in Paris", "Land of Joy", "Frivolities of 19--", "Dimpled Darlings", "Bright Eyes", "Happy Hours", "Pretty Babies", "Good Little Devils", "Follies of Pleasure", "Sky Rockets", "Ginger Girls", and "Smiles and Kisses".

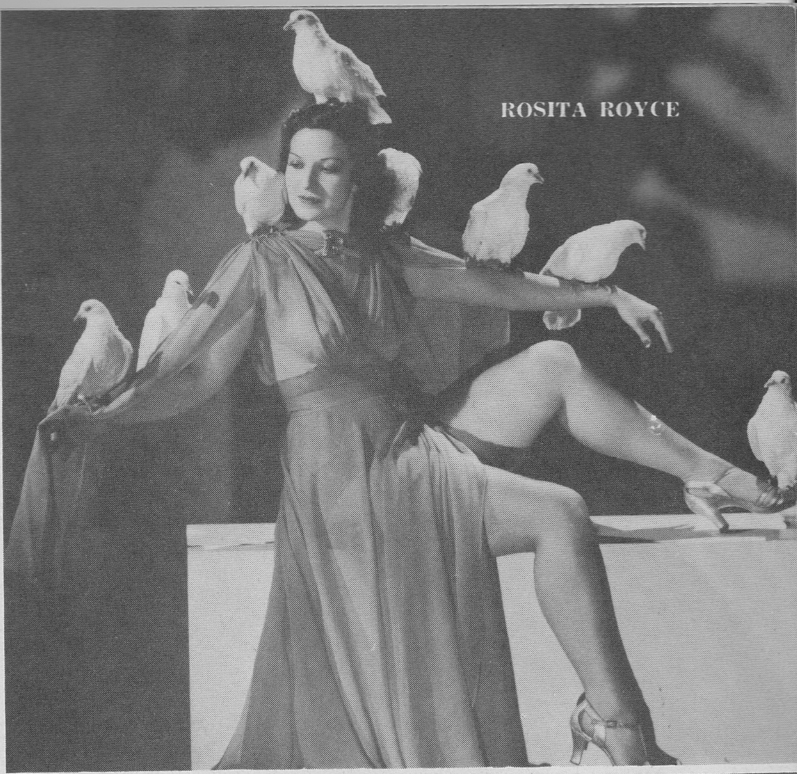
Most of the present day titles are taken from the old ones and re-vamped.

Some of the oldest theatres in point of housing the burlesque type of stage shows that are still presenting burlesque today are: Old Howard, Boston, Massachusetts; Troc, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Gayety, Baltimore, Maryland; Gayety, Detroit, Michigan; Empire, Newark, New Jersey; Lyric, Allentown, Pennsylvania; Hudson, Union City, New Jersey; Casino, Boston, Massachusetts; Empress, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Gayety, Cincinnati, Ohio; Follies, Los Angeles, California; Burbank, Los Angeles, California; Hollywood, San Diego, California.

Other theatres presenting burlesque at the present time are: Globe, Atlantic City, New Jersey; Gaiety, Norfolk, Virginia; Palace, Buffalo, New York; Gayety, Toledo, Ohio; Rialto, Chicago, Illinois; Alvin, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Folly, Kansas City, Missouri; Grand, St. Louis, Missouri; Fox, Indianapolis, Indiana; Casino, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Roxy, Cleveland, Ohio; Park, Youngstown, Ohio; State, Youngstown, Ohio; Gayety, Columbus, Ohio; Embassy, Rochester, New York; Mayfair, Dayton, Ohio; President, San Francisco, California; Empress, Detroit, Michigan; Gem, Chicago, Illinois; Clover, Baltimore, Maryland; Beretania, Honolulu, Hawaii; Globe, Baltimore, Maryland; Joy, West Memphis, Arkansas; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Denver, Colorado; Dallas, Texas; Houston, Texas; Spokane, Washington; Seattle, Washington; Star, Portland, Oregon, and Oakland, California.

Many and varied are the theatres that played burlesque through the years. It would be impossible to give you the names of all of them.

Some of the theatres that have played burlesque for a great period of time, but that may not house burlesque shows at present, for some reason or other, or are no longer in existence, are: Roxy, Montreal, Canada; Casino, Toronto, Canada; Empire, Toronto, Canada; Bijou, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Gayety, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Empire, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Peoples, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Lyceum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Lyric, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Gayety, Boston, Massachusetts; Park, Boston, Massachusetts; Globe,



ROSITA ROYCE

DARDY ORLANDO

Boston, Massachusetts; Columbia, Boston, Massachusetts; Modern, Providence, Rhode Island; Lyric, Bridgeport, Connecticut; Park, Bridgeport, Connecticut; Armory, Bridgeport, Connecticut; Jacques, Waterbury, Connecticut; Winter Garden, New York City, New York; Irving Place, New York City, New York; Peoples, New York City, New York; Eltinge, New York City, New York; Republic, New York City, New York; Apollo, New York City, New York; American, New York City, New York; Gayety, New York City, New York; Central, New York City, New York; Columbia, New York City, New York; Hurtig and Seamon's Apollo, New York City, New York; Gotham, New York City, New York; Star, Brooklyn, New York; Gayety, Brooklyn, New York; Werba's, Brooklyn, New York; Oxford, Brooklyn, New York; Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland; Monumental, Baltimore, Maryland; Holiday Street, Baltimore, Maryland; Embassy, Baltimore, Maryland; Strand, Washington, D. C.; Colonial, Utica, New York; Van Curler, Schenectady, New York; Wedgeway, Schenectady, New York; Roxy, Toronto, Ontario, Canada; State, Trenton, New Jersey; Chester, Pennsylvania; Wilmington, Delaware; Hoboken, New Jersey; Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania; Johnstown, Pennsylvania; Wheeling, West Virginia; Stuebenville, Ohio; Orpheum, Reading, Pennsylvania; Capitol, Toledo, Ohio; Miles Royal, Akron, Ohio; Princess, Youngstown, Ohio; Victoria, British Columbia; Vancouver, Canada; Capitol, Albany, New York; Temple, Syracuse, New York; Gayety, Rochester, New York; Gayety, Buffalo, New York; Gayety, Toronto, Ontario, Canada; Gayety, St. Louis, Missouri; Olympic, Cincinnati, Ohio; Lyric, Dayton, Ohio; Lyceum, Columbus, Ohio; Columbia, Cleveland, Ohio; Gayety, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Gayety, Washington, D. C.; Palace, Baltimore, Maryland; Hyperion, New Haven, Connecticut; Lyceum, New London, Connecticut; Poli, Meriden, Connecticut; Stamford, Stamford, Connecticut; Plaza, Worcester, Massachusetts, and Empire, Providence, Rhode Island.

Also, Empire, Brooklyn, New York; Miner's Bronx, New York City, New York; Orpheum, Paterson, New Jersey; Casino, Brooklyn, New York; Casino, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Academy, Richmond, Virginia; Academy, Norfolk, Virginia; Court, Wheeling, West Virginia; Weller, Zanesville, Ohio; Grand, Canton, Ohio; Empire, Toledo, Ohio; Fairbanks, Springfield, Ohio; Grand, Terre Haute, Indiana; Pantheon, Vincennes, Indiana; Gayety, Kansas City, Missouri; Empire, Quincy, Illinois; Smith's Opera House, Geneva, New York; Grand, Auburn, New York; Stone Opera House, Binghampton, New York; Capitol, Schenectady, New York; and the Van Curler, Albany, New York.

And, Shubert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Palace, Detroit, Michigan; Broadway Strand, Detroit, Michigan; Folly, Detroit, Michigan; Loop, Detroit, Michigan; Fine Arts, Detroit, Michigan; Columbia, Detroit, Michigan; Times Square, Detroit, Michigan; Colonial, Detroit, Michigan; Avenue, Detroit, Michigan; National, Detroit, Michigan; Savoy, Atlantic City, New Jersey; Olympic, New York City, New York; Gayety, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania; Gayety, Scranton, Pennsylvania; Majestic, Paterson, New Jersey; Lyric, Newark, New Jersey; Gayety, Montreal, Canada; State, Springfield, Massachusetts; Savoy, Syracuse, New York; Corinthian, Rochester, New York; Garden, Buffalo, New York; Park, Erie, Pennsylvania; Cadillac, Detroit, Michigan; Empress, Chicago, Illinois; Gayety, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Gayety, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Garrick, Des Moines, Iowa; Gayety, Omaha, Nebraska, and Mutual, Kansas City, Missouri.

Also, Garrick, St. Louis, Missouri; Mutual, Indianapolis, Indiana; Gayety, Louisville, Kentucky; Empress, Cincinnati, Ohio; Empire, Cleveland, Ohio; Grand, Akron, Ohio; Academy, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Mutual, Washington, D. C.; Gayety, Baltimore, Maryland; Strand, Shamokin, Pennsylvania; Majestic, Williamsport, Pennsylvania; Academy, Lebanon, Pennsylvania; Orpheum, York, Pennsylvania; Opera House, Columbia, Pennsylvania; Mishler's Opera House, Altoona, Pennsylvania; Maryland, Cumberland, Maryland; West End, Uniontown, Pennsylvania; Lyceum, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania; Chestnut Street, Sunbury, Pennsylvania; Fulton Opera House, Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Globe, Washington, Pennsylvania; Majestic, Jersey City, New Jersey; Broadway, Indianapolis, Indiana; Empress, St. Paul, Minnesota; Calumet, Chicago, Illinois; Strand, Toronto, Canada; Cohen, Newburgh, New York; Palace, Trenton, New Jersey; Houston, Chicago, Illinois; Trocadero, Chicago, Illinois; Sam T. Jack's, Chicago, Illinois; Folly, Chicago, Illinois; Butte, Montana; Carson City, Nevada; Reno, Nevada; State, Seattle, Washington; Ogden, Utah; Salt Lake City, Utah; Duluth, Minnesota; Casino de Paree, New Orleans, Louisiana; Circle, New York City, New York; Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; Easton, Pennsylvania; Premier, Oakland, California; Star and Garter, Chicago, Illinois; Haymarket, Chicago, Illinois; Academy, Chicago, Illinois; Gary, Indiana; Empress, Kansas City, Missouri; Davenport, Iowa; Band Box, Cleveland, Ohio; Capitol, San Francisco, California; Arcade, Los Angeles, California; Majestic, Los Angeles, California; Kearny, San Francisco, California; Liberty, San Francisco, California.

The above is by no means a complete list of theatres that have played burlesque in America, but it is a representative majority.

MEI LING

BURLESQUE'S FIRSTS

Burlesque and its magic has shown the way for all other types of entertainment, if only for the numerous innovations copied from its stage; its policies; and its method of creating profitable business that originally had their start in the minds of the burlesque managers, producers, and performers.

The most outstanding "theft", or borrowing, from burlesque has been the strip-tease act, which is responsible for burlesque's present existence. You will find the strip-tease dance now in Broadway shows, in motion pictures, in night club entertainment, in cocktail bars, all over the world. In night clubs alone throughout the United States, it can be safely said that about 90 per cent use the strip-tease acts. In Los Angeles, Chicago, Florida, in every large metropolitan hub, you will find countless numbers of clubs, where, were it not for the use of the strip-tease, they would be out of business.

In foreign countries, such as South America, Japan, England, Germany, Mexico, Honolulu, burlesque is the featured attraction, if only because of the borrowed strip-tease specialty. Unofficial figures estimate that approximately one-half million people in the United States alone, view this form of entertainment each and every week. Who was it that said, "The end of burlesque is in sight"? ? ? ?

The "runways" that are found in presentation theatres, Broadway theatres, and night clubs, originated in burlesque.

The policy of presenting more than two shows per day, so that the entertainment would be available to the public during the time when the patrons had more leisure time, was first presented by the burlesque theatres. It is now used by all the large vaudeville theatres throughout the country, where they present five and six shows per day.

The origin of the midnight show was another burlesque first, with the only show being given on New Year's Eve. However, I. Hirst can be said to be the one who spread the use of the midnight show to other nights. He was the first who introduced the midnight show on Christmas Eve, and other holiday evenings, when the patrons did not have to go to work the following day. The use of this extra show gave the theatres an opportunity to increase their revenue. This policy has now been copied daily and weekly throughout the country, and we even find motion pictures giving daily midnight shows, and some running 24 hours per day.

Extra revenue through the sale of merchandise in the theatre was first introduced in the burlesque theatre. Now every theatre, large or small, thrives on this extra revenue of its candy stands and merchandise counters. Were it not for the popcorn, many a theatre would be closed today.

The first pair of lace tights on the American stage was worn by Miss Ina Hayward in Boston, in a burlesque show.

Amateur nights were first introduced at Miner's Bowery Theatre in New York, according to the Actors Fair Bulletin. It was here that budding aspirants for footlight fortune were given the opportunity to display their talents, with the audience holding the success or failure, by their approval or disapproval of the various contestants for prizes. Many stars first made their appearance on amateur shows, including Fannie Brice, Joe Cook, George White, James Barton, and Miller and Mack, the original "Black Crows", who tried out on an amateur night at the Troc Theatre in Philadelphia, and won a first prize of a watch worth eighty-five cents.

"The added attraction", another burlesque development was used to gain better attendance. These included vaudeville acts, and "shake" dancers. We find, that, at one time or another, almost all of the outstanding prize fighters were added attractions at burlesque theatres, including Jim Jeffries, Bob Fitzsimmons, Jack Johnson, Terry McGovern, Jim Corbett, Mickey Walker, John L. Sullivan, and Jack Dempsey.

Amateur and professional boxing bouts and professional wrestling were other added features used in burlesque theatres. Another famous added attraction was "Sandow", the strong man. The "hootchy-cootchy" dancer was an added feature during the early 1900's, and Little Egypt and Mlle. de Leon, the original "Girl in Blue", were outstanding attractions. Mlle. de Leon was the first person who threw garters to the audience.

The fad for community singing gained stature from burlesque. It was Gus Edwards who was the first singer in the audience, and he started in the gallery of Hurtig and Seamon's burlesque theatre in New York.

In 1890, Sam T. Jack's Creole Burlesquers was the first all colored burlesque company. Al Reeves, who gave Al Jolson his first start, is given credit as being the first to present a burlesque company made up of colored and white performers that was advertised as "Black and White Revues".

Irving Berlin's song, "Alexander's Ragtime Band" was helped to popularity by the composer himself, personally plugging this song in the burlesque theatres.

What one calls the master of ceremonies today, a stage personality all are acquainted with, first saw the light of day in a burlesque theatre. It was he who was given the job of introducing the added attractions and presenting them for approval to the audience, instead of the method as presented in vaudeville theatres with the use of enunciators or name cards.

The present day success of many Broadway shows, television, and radio revues, besides borrowing the talents of the burlesque performers, are due to a large extent from their borrowing most of the laugh-provoking skits of burlesque origin.

"Auction Nights" and "Country Store Nights" first presented in burlesque, can be said to be the forerunner of today's monumental quiz games and give-away programs.

To Billy (Beeftrust) Watson goes the honor of bringing to the burlesque stage the 200-pound lassie, and you will find numerous "beeftrust" chorus lines appearing in various theatres and night clubs today.

Earlier burlesque shows were of the book variety, based on a story with continuity, and to permit changes of scenery necessary vaudeville acts were used to interrupt the continuity. A patron arriving after the opening would have difficulty understanding or following the "plot" of the show.

As people began working less and less hours, and with more emphasis on the shift idea of work, they were desirous of seeking their amusement at all hours. Noting this trend, the burlesque managers and producers discontinued the use of the plot in their shows, and reverted to a condensation of the story into one-scene plays or sketches. There was presented a half dozen or more of these skits in a single show. These are now called "bits". At the end of each bit or scene the blackout technique was introduced into the theatre.

This blackout technique is the presentation by the performers of a joke or "punch line" at the end of a scene, which gives the cue to the stage electrician to darken all the lights on stage, and to get ready for the next performer's appearance. This is termed the blackout. The use of these short "bits" intermingled with chorus numbers and vaudeville acts, and later strip-tease numbers, is known as the revue type show. It was from this beginning that the musical and revue-type shows on Broadway borrowed their ideas.

LINDA SCOTT

MARGO

CARRIE FINNELL

JAI-LETA

CURTAIN TIME

Now we go on a trip back stage, and explore the procedure of getting a burlesque show ready for presentation to the public.

The first problem is to find the performers for the show. To do this, we get in touch with the leading artists or performers' representatives, who, at present, are: Lou Miller, of New York City; Milton Schuster, of Chicago, and Dave Cohn, of New York. Inquiry is made as to what performers are available for the show, and they are told that there is needed three comedians, a straight man, a juvenile who sings, a dance team, two vaudeville acts, two strip-tease girls, a feature strip-tease artiste, and a chorus number producer, such as Jack Montgomery, Eddie Lynch, Bill Henriques, Billy Koud, Paul Morokoff, Bunny Weldon, Natalie Cartier, Shirley Page, Frances Parks, Jackie Richards, or Lyle Page, who will put on the routine for the "kids" or chorus girls.

The chorus girls will be secured by advertising in the metropolitan centers of the country, and also by the help of the artists' representatives, and the chorus producer, who will know the whereabouts of some girls looking for work.

The artists' representatives get in touch with the performers that have been picked out, and offer them the jobs. They have contact with all the burlesque performers living in all parts of the United States. Their fees for securing the performers' work is generally five per cent of their compensation. In other fields of entertainment, the fee is 10 per cent, or higher. The fee is only paid by the principal members of the show, as the chorus girls do not pay any fee or commission.

Having secured the performers, they are then advised when to come to the theatre for rehearsal, generally three days before the show opens.

In the meantime, there are other chores to do. There must be ordered scenery, costumes, music, props, and chorus shoes. The first problem, upon the arrival of the chorus producer, is to have the general producer sit down with him to get a routine rundown of the show going to be presented. The general producer goes over with the number producer, the exact type of routines that are going into the show, the music for these numbers, the costumes needed, and the scenery required for the backgrounds. Upon the arrival of the other members of the cast, the producers sit down with the comedians and discuss the scenes or skits that are going to be used. Having decided on the musical numbers of the show, and the scenes of the show, there is called in the stage manager. He is advised of the scenery needs, and to check that the show can move from one set to the other without any delay in timing, and also to give the stage hands the necessary time to bring on stage all the required scenery and props for the next scene. This is important, for the stage hands are the parties responsible for the settings and props. There is given to him also for transfer to the stage hands, the cues for the blacking out of each scene. These he turns over to the various departments, such as: the electrical department which controls the back stage lights, the prop department which handles the props, the spot light operator, who lights up the stage from the front, the flyman, who operates the curtains, and the carpenter, who places the scenery on stage.

Having done all the preliminary work, the chorus producer is advised to get in touch with the Collins Costume Company, of Philadelphia, of which Eva Collins is her own designer. (Today this is the largest costume company in the United States and supplies costumes for about 90 per cent of the burlesque theatres in the country.) From this company, he orders the wardrobe for the show. The producer is also instructed to contact one of the scenery rental companies, and to order from them the necessary drops, travelers, and curtains needed for the show. These companies, like the Collins Costume Company, furnish most of the burlesque companies their scenery on a rental basis. They are the George Davis scenic studio, Kaj Veldon studio, and Frank Stevens studio. The chorus producer also presents the scenic artist and carpenter a sketch of the small set pieces needed, such as steps, doors, trees, etc.

Upon arrival of the chorus girls, the chorus producer arranges for rehearsals, and sees that the girls are measured for shoes equipped with taps. These usually are a silver or a gold shoe.

On the day before the opening there will be a general rehearsal. At this time the girls are going to run through the routines they have learned, with the orchestra, to get familiar with the music, since up to this time they have only been rehearsing with a piano player. The principal performers are going to discuss their music with the orchestra, so that the boys in the pit will be familiar with the cues needed in their act or skit. The electrician and the spot light man are also going to receive their cues of lighting for the entire show, from the performers, the chorus producer and the stage manager.

Curtain time is upon us!

All the performers are getting made up in their dressing rooms for the first scene of the show.

Come into the theatre, relax, make believe you are sitting in front of your television receiver, but about to enjoy a show that cannot be seen there.

Sit back . . . here comes that candy "butcher"!

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, we have a short time before curtain time, and at this time, it is generally regarded as refreshment time. With that thought in mind, you will find young men circulating throughout the entire theatre with ice cream, and cool refreshing drinks. While the young men are passing out refreshments, I'm going to ask everyone in the audience to be pleasant enough to extend me the courtesy of saying a few words. In return for this pleasant gesture, everyone seated in the theatre tonight will be the recipient of a beautiful, useful, and practical present. By that, we don't mean a toy, or a trinket, that you will hold in your hand, glance at, and throw underneath your seat. Here are the presents you're going to receive tonight. Number one, you will find, for the ladies, as well as the gentlemen, a number of fountain pen and pencil sets, you will also find opera glasses, and binoculars, that will come in very handy for the show you are about to witness. For the ladies, you will find powder and perfume sets, cosmetic sets, hosiery, four- and eight-piece Parisian ivory manicure sets. You will also find a number of lighters, cigarette cases and lighters combined, and many other presents that time will not permit me to mention. However, the featured presentation of the night will be several watches . . . Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm going to ask you to please bear in mind, when I use the word watches, don't feel for one moment that we are trying to insult your intelligence, by representing to you that these watches are fifty, sixty, or one-hundred dollar watches. That would be an absolute farce. The watches, that we are describing are nationally advertised, seven jewel watches, selling or retailing from five-ninety-five to twelve-ninety-five. You will find that they come with a one-year guarantee, and make a mighty fine timepiece. In all probability you're wondering what method we're going to use to distribute these presents. We can't take them and throw them in the air, as some people down front would receive most of the gifts, people from the back of the theatre would run down the aisles and possibly get injured. That's not advertising, that's paralyzing. The firm I represent, The California Candy Co., have instructed me specifically to treat everyone with tact and respect, and that we're certainly going to abide by. You may have one of these presents by obtaining a box of the California Chocolate Dainties which are being presented at twenty-five cents the box, with one clear understanding in mind, I don't want to sound repetitious, but I must impress everyone here tonight, that you are not taking a gamble or chance of any kind, as every box is guaranteed to have a present that I've mentioned or your money will be refunded. Before I conclude the sale, if you receive nothing more than a box of California Dainties, it would be money, and time well spent. Thank you."

The orchestra comes into the pit . . . the maestro strikes his baton, and the overture is played, it is, "There's no Show Like a Burlesque Show", set to the music of "There's no Business Like Show Business".

The curtains part . . . the lights go up, the chorus girls and the juvenile are discovered on stage, singing and dancing, to the following lyrics, in front of a scene depicting a stage door entrance.

LOTUS DU BOIS

"BOBBIE" PARKER

NONA CARVER

"Hello every-body, we say hello to you.
We're here to entertain you, with a snappy revue,
Each one of us will sing a song, and dance with lots of pep,
And when it comes to dancing, you will have to watch
our step.
For our time is always jazz time,
You'll find a new tune where-ever you go,
You don't have to hesitate,
Now come on, and make a date,
To see a snappy, peppy burlesque show".

After the opening, the girls leave the stage, and the following scene takes place in front of the stage door.

"AT THE STAGE DOOR"

Comic

(Rushes on stage with bouquet of flowers.)

Straight

Hello Skinny, where are you rushing?

Comic

I'm not a Russian, I'm a Republican.

Straight

Where did you get the beautiful bouquet of flowers?

Comic

Down the street. They were hanging on a door knob.

Straight

You stole them?

Comic

Yeah, but the guy don't know it.

Straight

Why not?

Comic

'Cause he's dead.

Straight

What are you doing here at the stage door?

Comic

I just saw the show, and I want to meet the girl that goes like this. (Shakes hips.)

Straight

I know exactly to which one you're referring. If you act like a gentleman, I'll introduce you to her.

Comic

Oh I'll act like a gentleman alright. You just introduce me to the girl that goes like this. (Shakes hips again.)

Straight

She's a high class girl, and she don't go out with every Tom, Dick, and Harry.

Comic

That's alright, I'm Skinny. Can you fix it?

Straight

Can I fix it? Just look me over.

Comic

No, I'd rather have a girl.

Straight

You want me to dig one up for you?

Comic

Don't dig her up. I want a live one. Hurry up will you? (Excited.)

Straight

Now don't get excited. Control yourself.

Comic

My control is alright—my clutch is slipping.

Straight

Are you nervous?

Comic

No, just anxious.

Straight

The show is over now, and the girls will soon be coming out of the stage door. You will do O.K. if you follow my instructions.

Girl

(Enters from stage door and goes to right side of stage.)

Comic

There she is now. (Over to girl.) Hey baby, will you go like this? (Shakes hips.) For me?

Straight

(Grabs and pulls him across stage.) You can't ask her to do that out here. She gets paid for doing that.

Comic

That's alright with me. I'll give her thirty-five cents.

Straight

Remember what I told you. You must act like a gentleman. First I'll introduce you. Miss Lee I want you to meet Mr. Lewis. Mr. Lewis, this is Miss Lee.

Comic

(Goes over to girl.) Hello Miss Lee, I'm glad to meet 'cha. Now that I know you, will you go like this? (Shakes hips again.)

Straight

(Pulls him aside.) I told you that you can't ask her to do that here. Now to make a good impression, give her the flowers. Give her the flowers as a token of your esteem.

Comic

(Gives her the flowers.) Here you are baby. Take these flowers because I'm full of steam.

Straight

You're not full of steam.

Comic

The heck I ain't.

Straight

Now ask her if she'll have dinner with you.

Comic

Would you like to go over to the Busy Bee and split a hot dog with me?

Straight

(Pulls him aside.) Not the Busy Bee. I told you that she was a high class girl. Tell her that you'll have dinner at the Astor.

Comic

Sure. We'll have dinner at the—did you say Astor?

Straight

Yes.

Comic

What time do they put the pails out?

Straight

Never mind. Ask her to go out to dinner.

Comic

Would you like to go to dinner with me?

Girl

I'd love it.

Comic

Would you like to take a ride in my automobile?

Girl

Oh, you have a car? What kind?

Comic

A 1924 Essex. I won't drive fast, because I have to throw it in second to go over a car track.

Girl

I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll get into your car and drive down by the river and then park alongside of the dam, and then you can kiss me. You will kiss me by the dam, won't you?

Comic

Not by a dam sight.

Straight

You certainly will.

Comic

Will it be alright?

Straight

Certainly, but don't get too fresh.

Comic

O. K. baby, I'll kiss you by the dam, and then what?

Girl

Then we'll drive to a night club and have something to eat and drink, and then we'll drive to another night club and have some more to eat and drink, and then . . .

Comic

(Stops her.) Wait a minute. (To Straightman.) This dame ain't hungry—she's empty.

Straight

Never mind. You're doing fine.

Comic

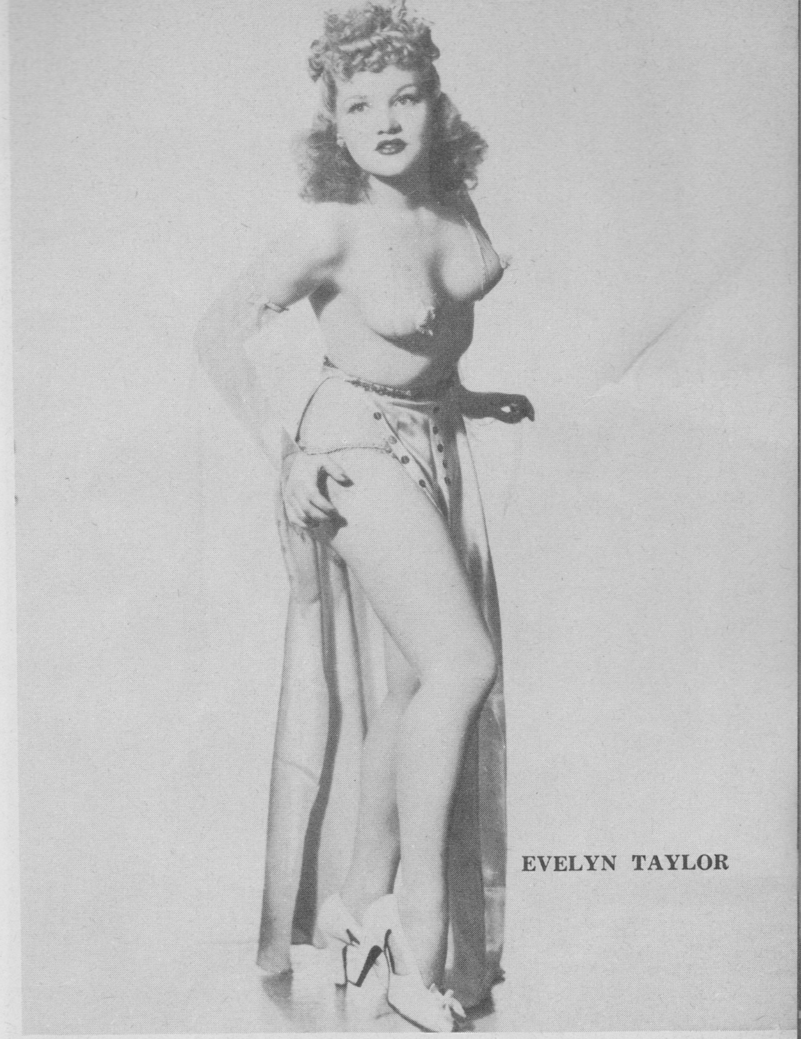
(To girl.) What happens next?

Girl

Then we'll drive to my home, and we'll go into the living room, sit down on the settee—

Comic

(Excited.) Yes, yes.



EVELYN TAYLOR

ILKA DE CAVA

LOIS de FEE

Girl

We'll turn down the lights.

Straight

Now I'll tell you what to do.

Comic

From now on I know what to do. Keep going.

Girl

You put your arms around me, and I'll put my arms around you, then you kiss me, and I'll kiss you—we'll hug and kiss for about two hours . . .

Comic

Yes, and then?

Girl

Then it will be about four o'clock in the morning, so I'll go upstairs and go to sleep.

Comic

You go up stairs and go to sleep.

Girl

Yes.

Comic

What happens to me?

Girl

You go home.

Comic

Let me get this straight. I take you out for a ride in my car. We go to a night club and have something to eat and drink, then we go to another night club; have some more to eat and drink, then I kiss you by the dam. Then we drive home, go into the living room, sit on the settee, we hug and kiss for two hours, you go upstairs and go to sleep . . . and I go home?

Girl

Yes!

Comic

Gimme back my flowers. (Grabs flowers from girl and crosses to left stage.)

Straight

What's the idea of insulting the girl?

Comic

Where does she get that stuff? I'm no chump.

Straight

You can't go around insulting women. Do you realize that she may be the mother of a President some day?

Comic

Yes, if she ain't careful.

Straight

And while we're on the subject of women, let me tell you something that may interest you. (This is a music cue, and the straightman sings.)

Now who breaks a heart like a child breaks a toy?
It's a man everytime, it's a man.
And who brings her sorrow, and takes all her joy?
It's a man everytime, it's a man.
Now if he makes a blunder, the whole world forgives,
But she has to suffer as long as she lives,
And who is to blame, if her head hangs in shame?
It's a man everytime, it's a man. (Slaps the comedian.)
Now let that be a lesson to you. (Starts to walk away.)

Comic

(Grabs him.) Don't go away. I too have a little story. (Rolls up sleeves.)

(Music cue to the same music for a parody.)

Now who buys her clothes, fancy hats, and silk hose?
It's a man everytime, it's a man.
And who buys her rocks, and has holes in his socks?
It's a man everytime, it's a man.
A young married couple expecting a son,
The neighbors all praise her, if triplets do come,
But, who stands in the hall—and gets no credit at all?
(All three join in next line and sing in harmony.)
IT'S A MAN EVERYTIME, IT'S A MAN.

Blackout

The first traveler closes in on the scene, and a vaudeville act appears, go through their acrobatic routine. At the completion of their act, the first strip-tease specialty is presented. Following her number the curtains part on a street scene.

"THE TRAFFIC COP"

(At opening, Straight man enters left stage dressed as policeman, he blows whistle and talks to comic who is off stage, right.)

Straight

Hey! pull over there, and get out of that car—yes you, I'm talking to—get out of that car and come here.

Comic

(Enters dressed as rube, walks to center stage, alongside of policeman.)

Straight

Do you know what you were doing? You were driving fifty miles an hour on a one way street . . . going in the opposite direction . . . passed a red light . . . and driving on the sidewalk!

Comic

Did I do something wrong?

Straight

Did you do something wrong? Where do you think you were going?

Comic

I was going to the fights. One round Henry is fighting.

Straight

Well, you'll see Judge Rosen first.

Comic

Who's he fighting?

Straight

He's in the preliminaries . . . oh, a wise guy, eh? Let me see your license.

Comic

I haven't got a license.

Straight

You haven't got a license? You took a test didn't you?

Comic

Uh huh.

Straight

How did it turn out?

Comic

Negative.

Straight

Come on, produce your license.

Comic

I don't need a license, it's not my car.

Straight

Oh, a stolen car, eh?

Comic

I didn't steal it, I just borrowed it.

Straight

Where?

Comic

It was parked alongside of the road—I was cold, so I crawled in the front seat and went to sleep.

Straight

How did it get started?

Comic

My foot slipped.

Straight

Oh, your foot slipped . . . very funny. How's the brakes on that car?

Comic

Ain't go no brakes.

Straight

No brakes! How do you stop it?

Comic

I just put my foot out and drag it down.

Straight

Do you realize that you were driving fifty miles an hour?

Comic

Couldn't be. This car won't run an hour.

Straight

What's the idea of that paint job on that car—green on one side and yellow on the other?

Comic

That's to fool the State Police.

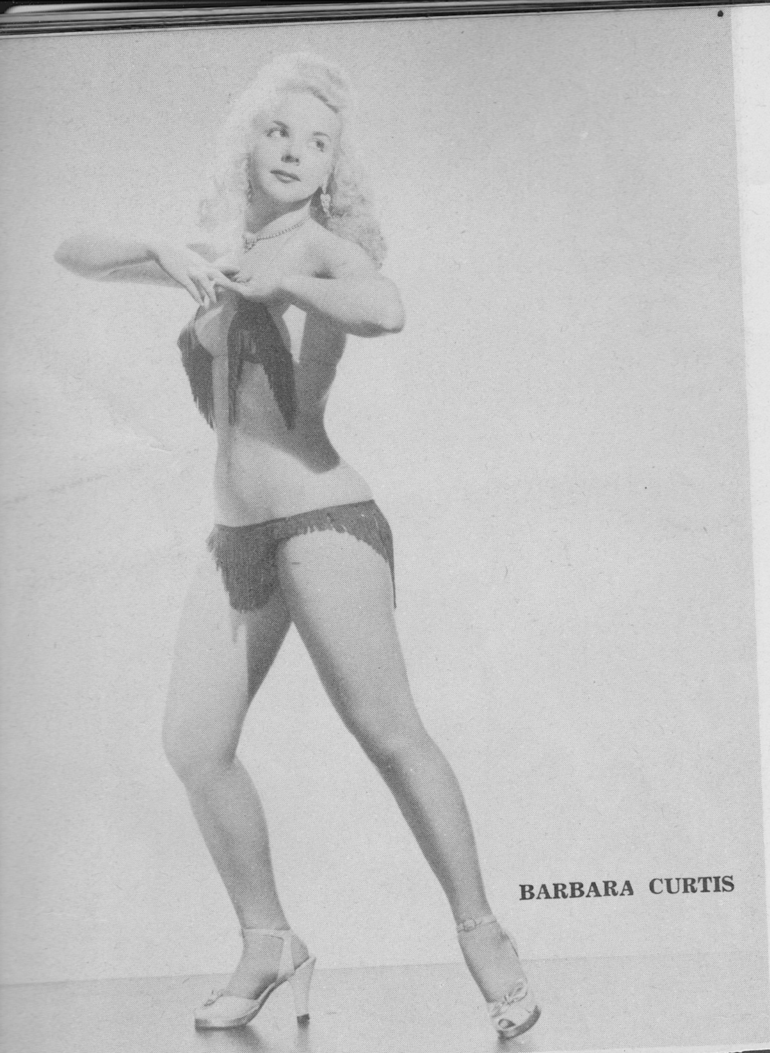
Straight

Who did it?

Comic

I did.

PRINCESS LAHOMA



BARBARA CURTIS

HILLARY DAWN

Straight

Judge Rosen will just love you. He'll probably ask you to stay the week-end.

Comic

Has he got nice rooms?

Straight

Never mind. Where are you from?

Comic

New Jersey.

Straight

One of those smart Jerseyites. Come all the way over here to New York to break our traffic laws—do you like our stagger system?

Comic

I don't know. I don't drink.

Straight

I mean our lighting system . . . our lights.

Comic

O, yes, they're very pretty.

Straight

I don't mean the electric signs, I mean the traffic lights. Do you ever look at them?

Comic

Once in awhile.

Straight

Once in awhile! Do you know what they stand for?

Comic

(Nods.)

Straight

What's the green light for?

Comic

Go.

Straight

That's right. You surprised me. What's the red light for?

Comic

Stop.

Straight

Right. What's the yellow light for?

Comic

Go like hell to beat the red light.

Straight

What's the idea of the windshield being painted black?

Comic

The sun gets in my eyes.

Straight

You have two bumpers on your car—why?

Comic

One belongs to me, and the other one belongs to the guy who was parked in front of me.

Straight

Do you know the difference between the street and the sidewalk?

Comic

You hit more people on the sidewalk.

Straight

And do you know what the white line the center of the road is for?

Comic

Motorcycles.

Straight

What kind of a car is it?

Comic

A 1924 Essex deluxe.

Straight

You look like a big strong fellow. Why don't you join the armed forces?

Comic

That's just what I intended doing when you stopped me.

Straight

With that face of yours . . . if you can't fight the enemy, you can scare them to death.

Comic

Thanks and the same to you.

Straight

I'm going to give you one more chance. If you answer this question correctly, I'll turn you loose without a ticket. You said that you came over here from Jersey . . . Well, tell me this, how did you get through the Holland Tunnel?

Comic

There's a hole in the other end.

Straight
That's all brother—come with me. (They both exit.)

Blackout

By this time the chorus girls have made a change of wardrobe into abbreviated costumes, and appear doing a fast tap dance and novelty number, in front of the first traveler which was closed following the traffic cop scene. Upon the girls' exit, the second strip-tease specialty dancer is presented. After her number is finished, the following scene takes place in front of the street curtain.

THE PHYSICAL

This scene opens with an announcement over the off-stage public address system.

Voice
Ladies and gentlemen, with the new conscription law of drafting men into the armed forces, between the ages of 19 and 25, in view we now take you into the future, and show you what might happen to you. (The first portion of this scene opens in front of a street drop in one. The comedian enters from one side of the stage and his friend from the other side. They meet.)

Friend
Hello Sparky, where are you going? What's your hurry?

Comic
I'm on my way to enlist in the Army.

Friend
So you're not going to wait until you're conscripted?

Comic
No, I'm going to join up before they come and get me. In fact, I'm on my way to the doctor's office now to be examined . . . but doctors always make me nervous .

Friend
I have just the thing for your nerves. (Pulls out whiskey flask from pocket.) Take this, and if you feel faint or nervous, just take a drink and it will fix you up.

Comic
(Takes flask.) Thanks. (Starts to take a drink.)

Friend
Wait! Don't take it now!

Comic
I'm nervous already. (Takes drink.)

Friend
Well, don't forget to save some for me. By the way, where is the doctor's office?

Comic
(Points left.) That way.

Friend
I'll walk part of the way with you. (Both men exit. Curtain pulls away to full stage which is an interior of a doctor's office. Straight man, who is the doctor, is seated behind desk, talking over phone.)

Doctor
Yes, this is Doctor Baker talking. You say you have a hundred new recruits waiting to be examined? Well, send them in, one at a time. (Hangs up.)

Comic
(Enters left stage and walks toward desk.)

Doctor
Are you the new recruit?

Comic
Yes, sir.

Doctor
(Comes to front of desk with pencil and chart board in his hand.) What branch of the service do you prefer?

Comic
I'd like to be in the air corps.

Doctor
That's fine, but in order to become an aviator, you must pass with a very high I. Q.

Comic
A what?

Doctor
High I. Q. . . . High I. Q. (Leans toward comic.)

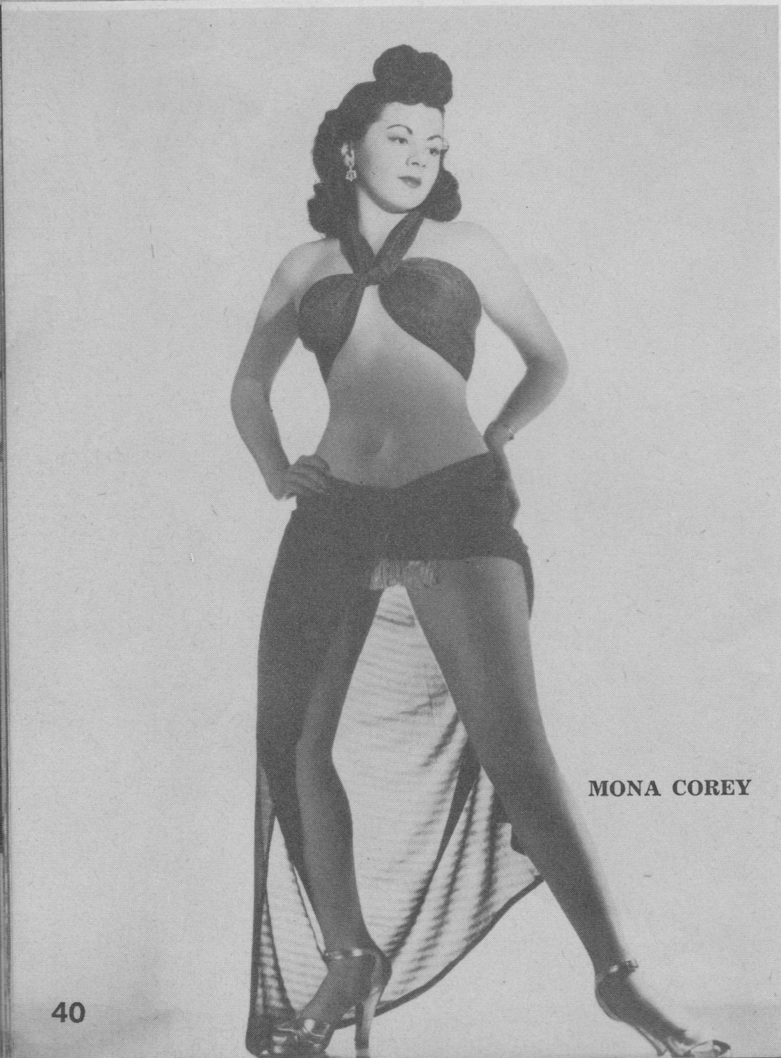
Comic
High ike you, too. (Sounds like "I like you.") (Comic kisses Doctor.)

Doctor
Cut out this foolishness . . . step down here and I'll swear you in. (Both walk forward.) Now raise your right hand and repeat after me, I hereby solemnly swear.

BEVERLY LANE

MITZI

SALLY MAJESTIC



MONA COREY

Comic

I hereby swallowed a hair . . .

Doctor

No, no, swear, SWEAR!

Comic

Hot dog, son of a gun, gee whiz.

Doctor

Never mind, answer these questions. What's your name?

Comic

James.

Doctor

What's your last name?

Comic

James.

Doctor

Well, what's your first name?

Comic

I just told you, James!

Doctor

What's your full name?

Comic

James J. James.

Doctor

What's the "J" for?

Comic

Jimmy . . . I'm the son of James and company, producers.

Doctor

Producers of what?

Comic

Little James-es.

Doctor

What's the name of your parents?

Comic

Mama and papa.

Doctor

No, no, what's your father's name?

Comic

Frank Opium James.

Doctor

Opium? Why opium is a dope.

Comic

So's my old man.

Doctor

Born?

Comic

Yes, sir.

Doctor

Where were you born?

Comic

Oh, there's been a discussion about that.

Doctor

A discussion?

Comic

Yes, they don't know whether it was in the front room or the back room, but to the best of my knowledge, I think it was under the kitchen sink.

Doctor

How do you know?

Comic

I could hear the water running.

Doctor

I mean in what State?

Comic

State of excitement.

Doctor

No, what State in the Union?

Comic

Oh, Pennsylvania.

Doctor

(Writing.) How do you spell Pennsylvania?

Comic

Very poorly.

Doctor

(Sternly.) Pennsylvania!

Comic

Pencil . . . pencil . . . it's a long son of a gun—put down a "Y" and work around it, and see what comes out.

Doctor

Pennsylvania!

Comic

Put down Ohio. (Spells.) O-h-one-O . . . spot the one.

Doctor

What city?

Comic

Pittsburgh.

Doctor

And when did you first see the light of day?

Comic

When we moved to Cincinnati.

Doctor

Are you married, single or otherwise?

Comic

Otherwise.

Doctor

Oh, so you have a girl?

Comic

(Bashful.) Oh, you know?

Doctor

Is she blonde, brunette, or titian?

Comic

Huh?

Doctor

I said, is she blonde, brunette, or titian?

Comic

Polish.

Doctor

Polish? Is she Checko-Slav or Yugo-Slav?

Comic

Just a good natured slob.

Doctor

Have you any dependents?

Comic

Two brothers.

Doctor

What are they?

Comic

Boys.

Doctor

I mean, what is their names?

Comic

Izzie and Wazzie.

Doctor

(Writes.) Izzie and Wazzie.

Comic

Wazzie is sick.

Doctor

Izzie? (Is he?)

Comic

No, Wazzie.

Doctor

Is he sick?

Comic

Izzie ain't sick, Wazzie is sick.

Doctor

Well, I'm asking you.

Comic

And I'm telling you.

Doctor

You're telling me what?

Comic

Wazzie is sick.

Doctor

IS HE SICK?

Comic

He got well again.

Doctor

Why were you born in Pittsburgh?

Comic

WHY was I born in Pittsburgh?

Doctor

Yes, why were you born in Pittsburgh?

Comic

Because I wanted to be near my Mother.

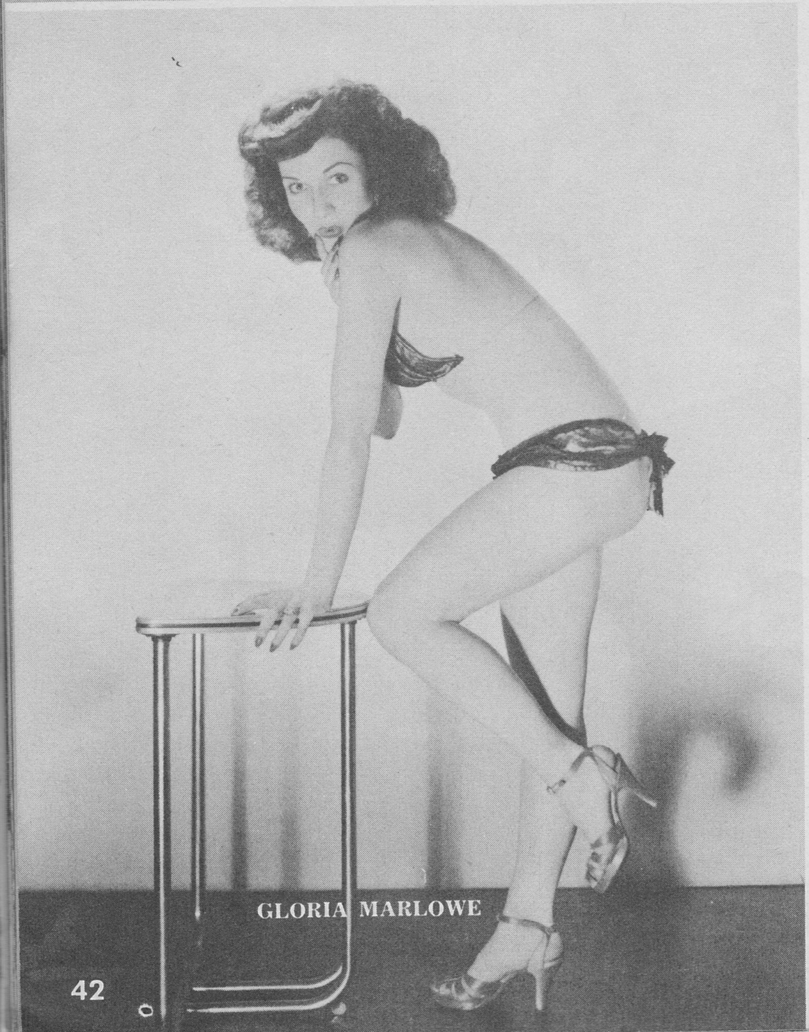
Doctor

You're impossible.

RUTH SWANK

CEIL VON DELL

MICKEY JONES



GLORIA MARLOWE

Comic

You're not so hot yourself.

Doctor

I'll have to give you a physical examination, stick out your tongue. (Comic does so.) Further . . . further . . . further . . .

Comic

I can't, it's hooked on back there. (Points to throat.)

Doctor

I'll have to give you a more thorough examination—take off your coat.

Comic

(Starts to take off coat and mumbles. Doctor goes back to desk, and gets graduating glass, returns to comic and hands same to him.) What's that for?

Doctor

You know what to do with that? (Doctor returns to desk. Comic takes out flask and pours slowly into glass, about three fingers. Doctor returns and gets glass from comic and holds same up in the air.) Why that's not enough!!

Comic

That's all I can spare!

Blackout.

The music strikes up and the second vaudeville act appears on stage. After their variety turn, the singer steps in front of the public address system singing a Hawaiian song hit. The curtains part and there comes to view an elaborate stage setting representing a South Sea Island. The chorus, dressed in sarongs, are doing a native dance. During this "ballet", the dance team, dressed in appropriate costume, re-create a native "love dance", while the chorus girls are posed in the background. At the conclusion of this dance, the singer reappears in a reprise of the song he sang at the opening of the number. The curtain closes—the street drop is lowered and the next skit is:

"THE MAN ON THE STREET"

(Straight man enters, walks to center stage to the microphone.)

Straight

Ladies and Gentlemen, at this time we present the "Man on the Street" program. This program takes place in front of Macy's Department Store, and my job is to interview different people passing by. Now if I could secure the services of some young man . . .

Comic

(Walks on to stage and stands at left side of Straight man.)

Straight

(Looks at him.) My friend, I asked for a young man. You'll never live to be as old as you look. (To audience.) No doubt you've all heard of Clark Gable—this must be his brother, un-able.

Comic

No doubt you've all heard of the March of Time—this must be his brother, waste of time.

Straight

Look at the face on that thing. If there is anyone out there with a hunting license—what are you waiting for? My friend, this is the "Man on the Street" program, and I'd like to ask you a few questions. Do you mind?

Comic

It won't hurt will it?

Straight

Not at all. First of all, I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Arliss, and yours?

Comic

Phillipps.

Straight

Not the Phillipps that makes the magnesia?

Comic

No, the Phillipps that takes it.

Straight

(Shakes hands with Comic vigorously.)

Comic

We'll have milk here in a minute.

Straight

Come now, I think you're kidding me. What's your real name?

Comic

William G. Hagen.

Straight

What's the "G" for?

Comic

Gwendolyn!

Straight

Gwendolyn?

Comic

Yes. You see my Mother wanted a girl.

Straight

What do you do for a living?

Comic

I work in a bloomer factory.

Straight

Do you make much?

Comic

I pull down about eighty-five a week.

Straight

That's not a bad salary. What did you do before working in this factory?

Comic

I was in California, in pictures.

Straight

Well that's a surprise. What pictures were you in?

Comic

I was in "Dinner at Six".

Straight

You mean "Dinner at Eight."

Comic

I was hungry and couldn't wait. I was also in "Captain Blood."

Straight

What do you do in that picture?

Comic

I was a transfusion.

Straight

Any others?

Comic

Yes, I was in the "Fourth Man".

Straight

You mean "The Third Man."

Comic

Everything is going up. Then I was in that Academy Award picture called "Aladdin and His Lamp", and I played the part of the wick.

Straight

Did you like it?

Comic

Sure, I was lit up every night.

Straight

(Looks at his suit.) Where did you get that bag you're wearing? That looks like one of the bundles that Britain refused. Where's the potatoes that came with that sack?

Comic

That's imported from England. (Puts arm under straight man's nose.) Smell the ocean.

Straight

What kind of material is it?

Comic

Eaton.

Straight

English Eaton?

Comic

No, moth-eaten! By the way, that's a nice suit you have on. Who shines it for you?

Straight

This is a very good suit. Had it made in Chicago.

Comic

Where were you at the time?

Straight

In Pitts—listen this is a good suit. It cost me $150. I'm a high liver.

Comic

To me you look like a floating kidney.

Straight

Now don't get fresh.

Comic

You know, I used to be a tailor, and I can make you a nice suit with a belt in the back, for only three hundred dollars.

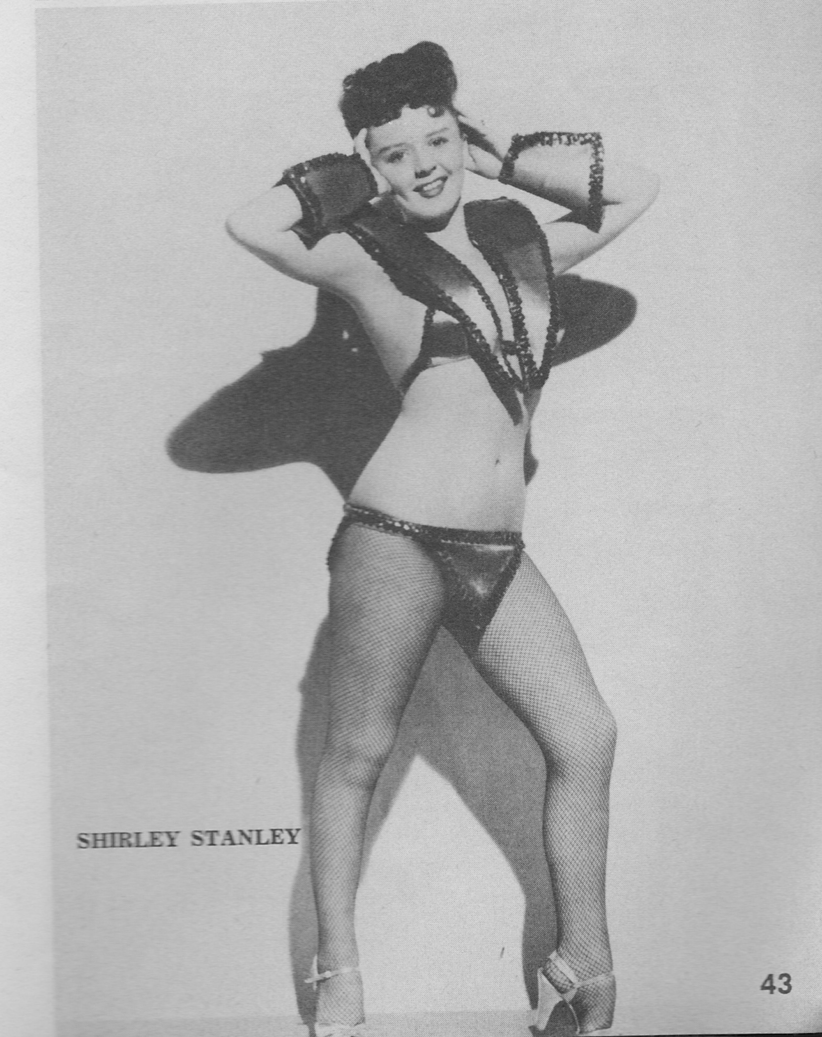
Straight

Three hundred dollars? You're no tailor, you're a robber.

Comic

That's me, Robert Taylor. (Strikes a pose.)

DIANE SHAW



SHIRLEY STANLEY

Straight

What do you do socially?

Comic

I mingle with the upper set.

Straight

YOU mingle with the upper set?

Comic

Why yes. Only last week in Washington, I mingled with the upper set.

Straight

What did you do with the lower?

Comic

Let 'em home in a glass of water.

Straight

You look familiar to me. Didn't I see your picture on a bottle of iodine?

Comic

Oh, yeah, well if you have your life to live over again—don't do it.—You look like Jessica Dragon-her-net.

Straight

Where do you come from?

Comic

Hollywood, California.

Straight

Hollywood—I suppose you met a lot of movie stars out there.

Comic

Sure did.

Straight

What do you think of Hedy Lamarr?

Comic

She's a good kid . . . making a buck.

Straight

What do you think of Lily Pons?

Comic

Too short.

Straight

How about Kate Smith?

Comic

Too large.

Straight

How do you like Nelson Eddy?

Comic

Oh, I love her.

Straight

I suppose you met a lot of band leaders there also?

Comic

Yeah—met 'em all.

Straight

What do you think of Tommy Dorsey?

Comic

He's got a hot band.

Straight

How about Harry James?

Comic

He plays a hot trumpet.

Straight

How do you like Phil Spitalny and his all girl orchestra?

Comic

Oh, he's got thirty-two pieces—all instrument of course.

Straight

Speaking of Harry James—what has he got that I haven't got?

Comic

Betty Grable.

Straight

How about your habits. Do you smoke?

Comic

No, sir.

Straight

Do you drink?

Comic

No, sir.

Straight

Do you go out with women?

Comic

No, sir.

Straight

You don't smoke, drink, or go out with women. What do you do for excitement?

Comic

I throw eggs in electric fans.

Straight

Did I understand you to say that you don't go out with women?

Comic

No, they only get you in trouble. I should know, because I've been married eight times. One time I came home unexpected and found my wife in the arms of my best friend. Boy, did I burn up. But what really made me mad, was when my wife said, "Honey pull up a chair and learn something". You know things like that happen. The same thing happened to a friend of mine who lives down the street from me. But he was a little more ferocious. He came home and found his wife in the arms of his best friend.

Straight

What did he do?

Comic

Oh, nothing—he just pulled out a butcher knife that long, and stuck it in him.

Straight

That's terrible. Did he die?

Comic

Did he die? If he didn't, they played him a dirty trick. They buried him.

Straight

Boy, that was terrible.

Comic

Yeah, but it could have been worse.

Straight

Could have been worse. How?

Comic

If he had come home a half-hour sooner—he'd a got me.

Straight

Don't you realize that woman is God's greatest gift?

Comic

He can have my gift back.

Straight

If it weren't for women, where would you men be?

Comic

In the Garden of Eden playing ping pong. You don't realize that man is the world's greatest invention.

Straight

Yes, and the woman is an improvement over that invention.

Comic

Oh, that's why the boys hang around the Footlight Cafe—looking for improvements?

Straight

You think that you're smart, don't you?

Comic

I should be, I was born twins.

Straight

Born twins? Does that make you smart?

Comic

Sure, two heads are better than one.

Straight

Did you have any difficulty with your twin brother?

Comic

I should say I did. Everything he did, I got the blame for it.

Straight

I don't understand.

Comic

Well, when we were kids, and played baseball—if he broke a window, I got blamed for it.

Straight

That's because you looked alike.

Comic

Yes. If he went into the five and ten cent store and stole something, I got the blame for it.

Straight

Because you resembled each other?

Comic

No, because we looked alike. Later on in life, as we grew older, I met a beautiful girl . . . and he married her.

Straight

That's awful.

Comic

But I got even with him.

Straight

You got even with him? How?

Comic

Last week I died, and they buried him.

Straight

My friend that about concludes this interview, and thanks very kindly for coming up here. However, before you leave, I'd like to inform you that without a doubt, you are the most illiterate person that I have had the misfortune of coming in contact with.

Comic

Thanks. That is very nice of you.

Straight

When I say illiterate, I mean that you're dumb. You haven't the intelligence of my youngest child. (Measures hand down low.)

Comic

You have a child?

Straight

Certainly. I have a family.

Comic

How long have you been married?

Straight

Three years.

Comic

That's good. How many children do you have?

Straight

Six!

Comic

Married three years, and have six children?

Straight

Yes.

Comic

That's damn good! How do you account for having six children, and only being married three years?

Straight

I attribute it to the reading that my wife did.

Comic

Reading? That's got something to do with it? How come?

Straight

Well, the first year we were married my wife read a book entitled, "One Night of Love", and at the end of that year, she presented me with a baby boy. The second year, she read a book called "A Tale of Two Cities", and at the end of the second year, she gave birth to twins. The third year, she read a book titled "Three Men on a Horse", and at the end of the third year, she presented me with triplets. That makes six all together. See?

Comic

Let me get this straight. The first year you were married, your wife read a book called "One Night of Love", and at the end of the year—bang—there was a baby boy—the second year, she read a book called "A Tale of Two Cities", and at the end of that year, she gave birth to twins. The third year, she read "Three Men on a Horse", and at the end of that year, she gave birth to triplets?

Straight

Yes.

Comic

(Very nervous.) I'll see you later—I have to rush home and stop my wife.

Straight

Why?

Comic

She's reading "The Birth of a Nation".

Blackout.

The orchestra strikes up a fanfare. Off stage, the following announcement is made over the public address system—"Now—ladies and gentlemen, we present the star of our show, the charming and exotic personality of the one and only . . . here she is."

The feature steps from between the center curtain. Her routine strip completed—the curtains open and the finale of the show is presented with the entire chorus and principal performers on stage. A variation of this has the chorus alone on stage at first. The principals are then introduced one by one until all are on stage to give those out front one last good look before the curtain falls on intermission.

GINGER BRITTON

DOLLY DAWSON

CAVALCADE OF BURLESQUE

The burlesque theatres, and the places of amusement offering the burlesque type of show, present some of the most delectable forms of entertainment for the American amusement seeker. It is down to earth entertainment. A mixture of musical comedy, hearty laughs, and plenty of legs. It is the poor man's entertainment paradise. It is really popular priced musical comedy and revue.

To produce a musical comedy one needs in the neighborhood of $200,000. This money is usually put up by a lot of "angels." The burlesque producers, having no "angels", but merely their own money, plus plenty of show business know how, put on these shows without the expensive scenery, and luxurious wardrobes, the use of previously copyrighted songs, instead of original music; but, they do not forget that a burlesque show must have girls, girls, and more girls, funny comics, good straight men, some specialty dancers, and vaudeville acts, and last, but by no means least, a good "G" string exponent, and not one on the orchestra leader's violin.

Much has been written about what has happened to burlesque. Briefly, the only thing that has happened to it, is that due to the growth of the entertainment industry, which includes the Broadway revues, musical comedy, and motion pictures of the musical revue type, with their deviation to double entendre and display of the female figure, it is found in more places than ever.

No longer is it necessary for the male population to sneak off to a side street burlesque house for the sight of a woman's leg or torso. Instead, the females having had a glimpse of the shows that have incorporated the ideas of burlesque, are now making their escorts take them to real burlesque shows.

In cities spread over the entire United States, burlesque is sometimes the public's only contact with live entertainment. Despite the influx of movies, television, and radio, the burlesque form of entertainment rolls merrily along in giving the public real "flesh" entertainment.

Let's not be kidded, burlesque is not absent from the New York scene. It is merely dressed up and sold to the public at prices that are beyond the reach of the general public, and given a different title.

Call it what you may, "there's no business like show business" and "there's no show like a burlesque show."

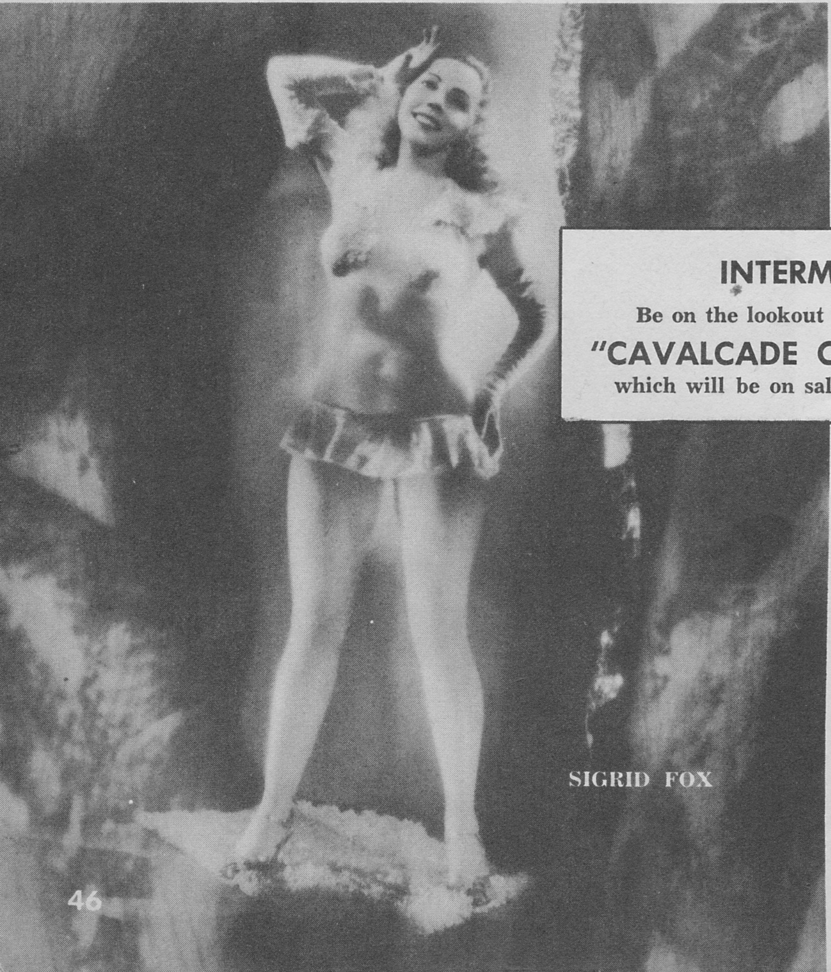
In every young man's days, burlesque should rank high in sentimental and joyous recollections. It does not delve into the sex exploitations of modern high toned drama, nor does it contain expression found in modern lyrics of the musical stage. It clings more to a pattern, and the pattern becomes an education that should be secured by every true blooded American.

When the readers, both male and female, of this and other illustrated magazines don't stop to look after a pretty female form, then it will be time for all to sit down at a "wake" for burlesque. Until that time, if you don't stop to look at that girl—what have you got to take her place?

The patrons of burlesque are not rowdys. They are, more and more, you and I, and the others who would like to see entertainment at prices they can afford to pay. Among its followers you will find many well-to-do people who are regular burlesque fans. This includes professional men, and public authorities, not forgetting that about 30 per cent of the audiences of today are comprised of women.

Sex in show business has been of greater value to the continuance of entertainment than all of the new-found miracle drugs. The introduction of the strip-tease was burlesque's miracle drug. It is a drug which intoxicates the audience by drawing them out of routine everyday life, and leading them into a dream world, in which every patron creates his own utopia. Histamine may cure your cold, sufa drugs may reduce your fever, but a strip-tease is the cure for all your blues.

The future entertainment, and the stars of the future radio, motion picture, night club, theatre, and television, must come from some place. In these United States there is no end of talent. This talent must be captured and trained to produce stars to equal those of the past and present. A burlesque show has been the training grounds of a great many of our stars of other fields today. Under proper guidance in the burlesque theatre their successors will still find it an ideal school for training. It is this school that shall supply many stars of the future.



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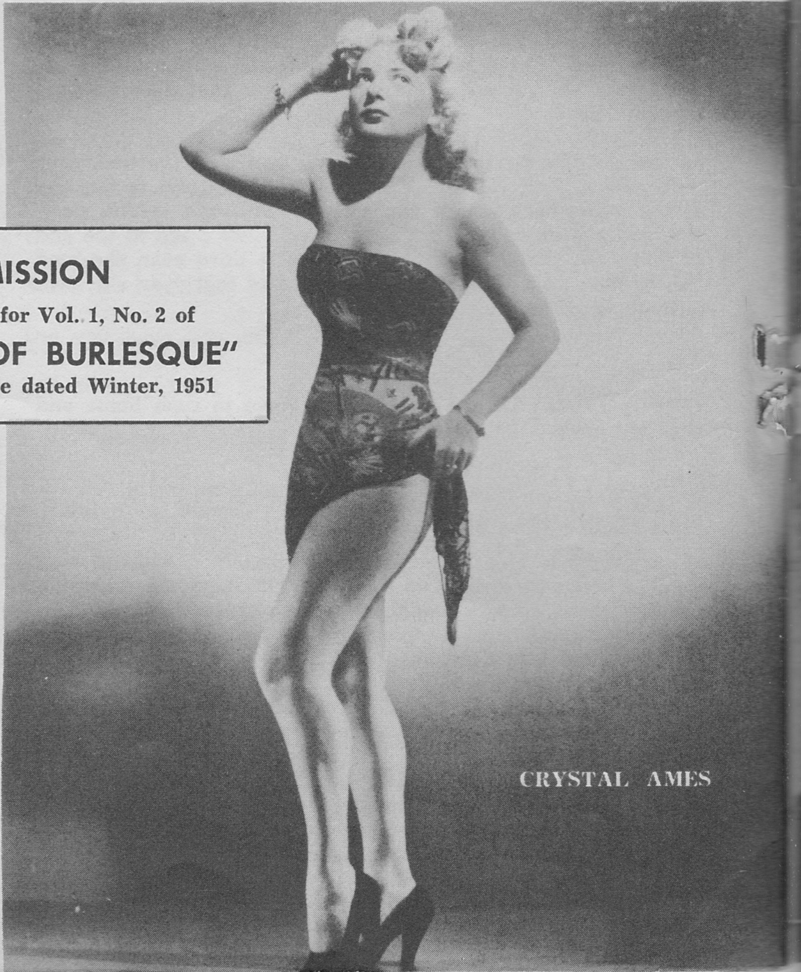

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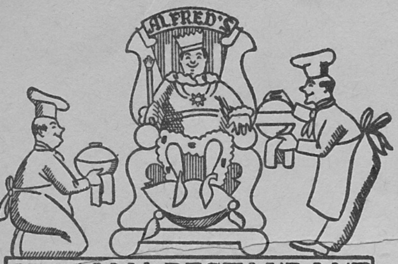

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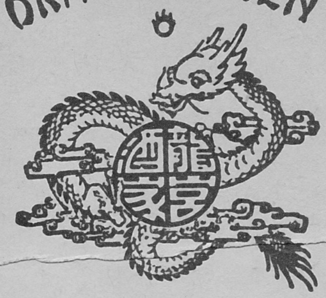

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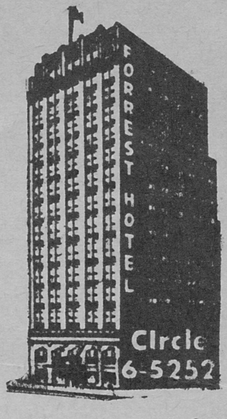

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